BROTHERS of PERIL

By THEODORE ROBERTS

Now O.P

BROTHERS OF PERIL

A Story of Old Newfoundland

WORKS OF

THEODORE ROBERTS



The Red Feathers . . $1.50

Brothers of Peril . . 1.50

Hemming the Adventurer 1.50



L. C. PAGE & COMPANY

New England Building, Boston, Mass.



"A VIVID CIRCLE OF RED ON THE SNOW OF THAT NAMELESS WILDERNESS"

Brothers of Peril

A Story of Old Newfoundland

By

Theodore Roberts

Author of "Hemming, the Adventurer"

Illustrated by H. C. Edwards



Boston ❧ L. C. Page & Company ❧ *Mdccccv*

Copyright, 1905
By L. C. Page & Company
(incorporated)

All rights reserved

Published June, 1905
Second Impression, March, 1908

COLONIAL PRESS
Electrotyped and Printed by C. H. Simonds & Co.
Boston, Mass., U. S. A.

Preface

During the three centuries directly following John Cabot's discovery of Newfoundland, that unfortunate island was the sport of careless kings, selfish adventurers, and diligent pirates. While England, France, Spain, and Portugal were busy with courts and kings, and with spectacular battles, their fishermen and adventurers toiled together and fought together about the misty headlands of that far island. Fish, not glory, was their quest! Full cargoes, sweetly cured, was their desire — and let fame go hang!

The merchants of England undertook the guardianship of the "Newfounde Land." In greed, in valour, and in achievement they won their mastery. Their greed was a two-edged sword which cut all 'round. It hounded the aborigines; it bullied the men of France and Spain; it discouraged the settlement of the land by stout hearts of whatever nationality. It was the dream of those merchant adventurers of Devon to have the place remain

2137932

for ever nothing but a fishing-station. They faced the pirates, the foreign fishers, the would-be settlers, and the natural hardships with equal fortitude and insolence. When some philosopher dreamed of founding plantations in the king's name and to the glory of God, England, and himself, then would the greedy merchants slay or cripple the philosopher's dream in the very palace of the king. Ay, they were powerful enough at court, though so little remarked in the histories of the times! But, ever and anon, some gentleman adventurer, or humble fisherman from the ships, would escape their vigilance and strike a blow at the inscrutable wilderness.

The fishing admirals loom large in the history of the island. They were the hands and eyes of the wealthy merchants. The master of the first vessel to enter any harbour at the opening of the season was, for a greater or lesser period of time, admiral and judge of that harbour. It was his duty to parcel out anchorage, and land on which to dry fish, to each ship in the harbour; to see that no sailors from the fleet escaped into the woods; to discourage any visions of settlement which sight of the rugged forests might raise in the romantic heads of the gentlemen of the fleet; to see that all foreigners were hustled on every occasion, and to take the best of everything for himself. Needless

to say, it was a popular position with the hard-fisted skippers.

In the narratives of the early explorers frequent mention is made of the peaceful nature of the aborigines. At first they displayed unmistakable signs of friendly feeling. They were all willingness to trade with the loud-mouthed strangers from over the eastern horizon. They helped at the fishing, and at the hunting of seals and caribou. They bartered priceless pelts for iron hatchets and glass trinkets. Later, however, we read of treachery and murder on the parts of both the visitors and the natives. The itch of slave-dealing led some of the more daring shipmasters and adventurers to capture, and carry back to England, Beothic braves and maidens. Many of the kidnapped savages were kindly treated and made companions of by English noblemen and gentlefolk. It is recorded that more than one Beothic brave sported a sword at his hip in fashionable places of London Town before Death cut the silken bonds of his motley captivity.

Master John Guy, an alderman of Bristol, who obtained a Royal Charter in 1610, to settle and develop Newfoundland, wrote of the Beothics as a kindly and mild-mannered race. Of their physical characteristics he says: "They are of middle size, broad-chested, and very erect. . . . Their

hair is diverse, some black, some brown, and some yellow."

As to the ultimate fate of the Beothics there are several suppositions. An aged Micmac squaw, who lives on Hall's Bay, Notre Dame Bay, says that her father, in his youth, knew the last of the Beothics. At that time — something over a hundred years ago — the race numbered between one and two hundred souls. They made periodical excursions to the salt water to fish, and to trade with a few friendly whites and Nova Scotian Micmacs. But, for the most part, they avoided the settlements. They had reason enough for so doing, for many of the settlers considered a lurking Beothic as fair a target for his buckshot as a bear or caribou. One November day a party of Micmac hunters tried to follow the remnant of the broken race on their return trip to the great wilderness of the interior. The trail was lost in a fall of snow on the night of the first day of the journey. And there, with the obliterated trail, ends the world's knowledge of the original inhabitants of Newfoundland; save of one woman of the race named Mary March, who died, a self-ordained fugitive about the outskirts of civilization, some ninety years ago.

To-day there are a few bones in the museum at St. John's. One hears stories of grassy circles be-

side the lakes and rivers, where wigwams once stood. Flint knives and arrow-heads are brought to light with the turning of the farmer's furrow. But the language of the lost tribe is forgotten, and the history of it is unrecorded.

In the following tale I have drawn the wilderness of that far time in the likeness of the wilderness as I knew it, and loved it, a few short years ago. The seasons bring their oft-repeated changes to brown barren, shaggy wood, and empurpled hill; but the centuries pass and leave no mark. I have dared to resurrect an extinct tribe for the purposes of fiction. I have drawn inspiration from the spirit of history rather than the letter! But the heart of the wilderness, and the hearts of men and women, I have pictured, in this romance of olden time, as I know them to-day. T. R.

November, 1904.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	A Boy Wins His Man-Name	1
II.	The Old Craftsman by the Salt Water	9
III.	The Fight in the Meadow	16
IV.	Ouenwa Sets Out on a Vague Quest	24
V.	The Admiral of the Harbour	34
VI.	The Fangs of the Wolf Slayer	43
VII.	The Silent Village	56
VIII.	A Letter for Ouenwa	65
IX.	An Unchartered Plantation	73
X.	Gentry at Fort Beatrix	83
XI.	The Setting-in of Winter	94
XII.	Meditation and Action	104
XIII.	Signs of a Divided House	116
XIV.	A Trick of Play-Acting	126
XV.	The Hidden Menace	133
XVI.	The Cloven Hoof	140
XVII.	The Confidence of Youth	148
XVIII.	Events and Reflections	156
XIX.	Two of a Kind	164
XX.	By Advice of Black Feather	174
XXI.	The Seeking of the Tribesmen	183
XXII.	Brave Days for Young Hearts	190
XXIII.	Betrothed	200

CHAPTER		PAGE
XXIV.	A Fire-lit Battle. Ouenwa's Return	207
XXV.	Fate Deals Cards of Both Colours in the Little Fort	217
XXVI.	Pierre d'Antons Parries Another Thrust	227
XXVII.	A Grim Turn of March Madness	233
XXVIII.	The Running of the Ice	241
XXIX.	Wolf Slayer Comes and Goes; and Trowley Receives a Visitor	252
XXX.	Maggie Stone Takes Much Upon Herself	264
XXXI.	While the Spars Are Scraped	273
XXXII.	The First Stage of the Homeward Voyage Is Bravely Accomplished	279
XXXIII.	In the Merry City	287
XXXIV.	Pierre d'Antons Signals His Old Comrades, and Again Puts to Sea	294
XXXV.	The Bridegroom Attends to Other Matters Than Love	306
XXXVI.	Over the Side	317
XXXVII.	The Mother	323

BROTHERS OF PERIL

A Story of Old Newfoundland

CHAPTER I.

A BOY WINS HIS MAN-NAME

THE boy struck again with his flint knife, and again the great wolf tore at his shoulder. The eyes of the boy were fierce as those of the beast. Neither wavered. Neither showed any sign of pain. The dark spruces stood above them, with the first shadows of night in their branches; and the western sky was stained red where the sun had been. Twice the wolf dropped his antagonist's shoulder, in a vain attempt to grip the throat. The boy, pressed to the ground, flung himself about like a dog, and repeatedly drove his clumsy weapon into the wolf's shaggy side.

At last the fight ended. The great timber-wolf

lay stretched dead in awful passiveness. His fangs gleamed like ivory between the scarlet jaws and black lips. A shimmer of white menaced the quiet wilderness from the recesses of the half-shut eyelids.

For a few minutes the boy lay still, with the fingers of his left hand buried in the wolf's mane, and his right hand a blot of red against the beast's side. Presently, staggering on bent legs, he went down to the river and washed his mangled arm and shoulder in the cool water. The shock of it cleared his brain and steadied his eyes. He waded into the current to his middle, stooped to the racing surface, and drank unstintingly. Strength flooded back to blood and muscle, and the slender limbs regained their lightness.

By this time a few pale stars gleamed on the paler background of the eastern sky. A long finger-streak of red, low down on the hilltops, still lightened the west. A purple band hung above it like a belt of magic wampum — the war-belt of some mighty god. Above that, Night, the silent hunter, set up the walls of his lodge of darkness.

The boy saw nothing of the changing beauty of the sky. He might read it, knowingly enough, for the morrow's rain or frost; but beyond that he gave it no heed. He returned to the dead wolf, and set

about the skinning of it with his rude blade. He worked with skill and speed. Soon head and pelt were clear of the red carcass. After collecting his arrows and bow, he flung the prize across his shoulder and started along a faint trail through the spruces.

The trail which the boy followed seemed to lead away from the river by hummock and hollow; and yet it cunningly held to the course of the stream. Now the night was fallen. A soft wind brushed over in the tree-tops. The voices of the rapids smote across the air with a deeper note. As the boy moved quietly along, sharp eyes flamed at him, and sharp ears were pricked to listen. Forms silent as shadows faded away from his path, and questioning heads were turned back over sinewy shoulders, sniffing silently. They smelt the wolf and they smelt the man. They knew that there had been another violent death in the valley of the River of Three Fires.

After walking swiftly for nearly an hour, following a path which less primitive eyes could not have found, the boy came out on a small meadow bright with fires. Nineteen or twenty conical wigwams, made of birch poles, bark, and caribou hides, stood about the meadow. In front of each wigwam burned a cooking-fire, for this was a land of

much wood. The meadow was almost an island, having the river on two sides and a shallow lagoon cutting in behind, leaving only a narrow strip of alder-grown "bottom" by which one might cross dry-shod. The whole meadow, including the alders and a clump of spruces, was not more than five acres in extent.

The boy halted in front of the largest lodge, and threw the wolfskin down before the fire. There he stood, straight and motionless, with an air of vast achievement about him. Two women, who were broiling meat at the fire, looked from the shaggy, blood-stained pelt to the stalwart stripling. They cried out to him, softly, in tones of love and admiration. Jaws and fangs and half-shut eyes appeared frightful enough in the red firelight, even in death.

"Ah! ah!" they cried, "what warrior has done this deed?"

"Now give me my man-name," demanded the boy.

The older of the two women, his mother, tried to tend his wounded arm; but he shook her roughly away. She seemed accustomed to the treatment. Still clinging to him, she called him by a score of great names. A stalwart man, the chief of the village, strode from the dark interior of the near-

est wigwam, and glanced from his son to the untidy mass of hair and skin. His eyes gleamed at sight of his boy's torn arm and the white teeth of the wolf.

"Wolf Slayer," he cried. He turned to the women. "Wolf Slayer," he repeated; "let this be his man-name — Wolf Slayer."

So this boy, son of Panounia the chief, became, at the age of fourteen years, a warrior among his father's people.

The inhabitants of that great island were all of one race. In history they are known as Beothics. At the time of this tale they were divided into two nations or tribes. Hate had set them apart from one another, breaking the old bond of blood. Each tribe was divided into numerous villages. The island was shared pretty evenly between the nations. Soft Hand was king of the Northerners. It was of one of his camps that the father of Wolf Slayer was chief.

Soft Hand was a great chief, and wise beyond his generation. For more than fifty years he had held the richest hunting-grounds in the island against the enemy. His strength had been of both head and hand. Now he was stiff with great age. Now his hair was gray and scanty, and unadorned by flaming feathers of hawk and sea-bird. The

snows of eighty winters had drifted against the walls of his perishable but ever defiant lodges, and the suns of eighty summers had faded the pigments of his totem of the great Black Bear. Though he was slow of anger, and fair in judgment, his people feared him as they feared no other. Though he was gentle with the weak and young, and had honoured his parents in their old age and loved the wife of his youth, still the strongest warrior dared not sneer.

The village of this mighty chief was situated at the head of Wind Lake. On the night of Wolf Slayer's adventure, Soft Hand and his grandson arrived at the lesser village on the River of Three Fires. They travelled in bark canoes and were accompanied by a dozen braves. The grandson of the old chief was a lad of about Wolf Slayer's age. He was slight of figure and dark of skin. His name was Ouenwa. He was a dreamer of strange things, and a maker of songs. He and Wolf Slayer sat together by the fire. Wolf Slayer held his wounded arm ever under the visitor's eyes, and talked endlessly of his deed. For a long time Ouenwa listened attentively, smiling and polite, as was his usual way with strangers. But at last he grew weary of his companion's talk. He wanted to listen, in peace, to the song of the river. How

could he understand what the rapids were saying with all this babbling of "knife" and "wolf" in his ears?

"All this wind," he said, "would kill a pack of wolves, or even the black cave-devil himself."

"There is no wind to-night," replied Wolf Slayer, glancing up at the trees.

"There is a mighty wind blowing about this fire," said Ouenwa, "and it whistles altogether of a great warrior who slew a wolf."

"At least that is not work for a dreamer," retorted the other, sullenly. Ouenwa's answer was a smile as soft and fleeting as the light-shadows of the fire.

At an early hour of the next morning the great chief's party started up-stream in their canoes, on the return journey to Wind Lake. For hours Soft Hand brooded in silence, deaf to his grandson's hundred questions. He had grown somewhat moody in the last year. He gazed away to the forest-clad, mist-wreathed capes ahead, and heeded not the high piping of his dead son's child. His mind was busy with thoughts of the events of the past night. He recalled the tones of Panounia's voice with a shake of the head. He recalled the sullen smouldering of that stalwart chief's eyes,

He sighed, and glanced at the lad in the forging craft beside him.

"I grow old," he murmured. "The voice of my power is breaking to its last echo. My command over my people slips like a frozen thong of raw leather. And Panounia! What lurks in the dull brain of him?"

The sun rose above the forest spires, clear and warm. The mists drew skyward and melted in the gold-tinted azure. Twillegs flew, piping, across the brown current of the river. Sandpipers, on down-bent wings, skimmed the pebbly shore. A kingfisher flashed his burnished feathers and screamed his strident challenge, ever an arrow-flight ahead of the voyagers. He warned the furtive folk of the great chief's approach.

"Kingfisher would be a fitting name for the boy who killed the wolf," said Ouenwa.

The old man glanced at him sharply. His thin face was sombre with more than the shadow of years.

"Nay," he replied. "His is no empty cry. Beware of him, my son!"

CHAPTER II.

THE OLD CRAFTSMAN BY THE SALT WATER

MONTAW, the arrow-maker, dwelt alone at the head of a small bay. His home was half-wigwam, half-hut. The roof was of poles, partly covered with the hides of caribou and partly with a square of sail-cloth, which had been given him by a Basque fisherman in exchange for six beaver skins. The walls of the unusual lodge were of turf and stone. Here and there were signs of intercourse with the strangers out of the Eastern sea, — an iron fish-hook, a scrap of gold lace, and a highly polished copper pot. Of these treasures the recluse was justly proud, for had he not acquired them at risk of sudden extinction by the breath of the clapping fire-stick?

The arrow-maker was an old man. In his youth he had been a hunter of renown and a great traveller, and had sojourned long in the lodges of the Southern nation. He had loved a woman of that people, — and she had given him laughter in re-

turn for his devotion. Journeying back to his own hunting-grounds, he had planned a huge revenge. At once all his skill and bravery had been turned to less open ways than those of the lover and warrior. In little more than a year's time he had driven the tribes to a lasting and bitter war. Even now as he sat before the door of his lodge, he was shaping spear-heads and arrow-heads for the fighting men of Soft Hand's nation. Some arrows he made of jasper, and some of flint, and some of purple slate. Those of slate would break off in the wound. They were the grim old craftsman's pets.

One day a young man from the valley of the River of Three Fires brought Montaw a string of fine trout, in payment for a spear-head. For awhile they talked together in the sunlight at the door of the lodge.

"For the chase," said the old man, "I make the long shape of flint, three fingers wide, and to this I bind a long and heavy shaft. Such an arrow will hold in the side of the running deer, and may be plucked out after death."

"I have even seen it, father," replied the young man, in supercilious tones; for he considered himself a mighty hunter.

"For the battle," continued the arrow-maker,

"I chip the flint and shape the narrow splinters of slate. All three are good in their way if the bow be strong — and the arm."

The old craftsman made a song. It was rough as his arrow-heads.

"Arrows of gray and arrows of black
Soon shall be red.
What will the white moon say to the proud
Warriors, dead?

"Arrows of jasper, arrows of flint,
Arrows of slate.
So, with the skill of my hands, I shape
Arrows of hate.

"Fly, my little ones, straight and true,
Silent as sleep.
Tell me, wind, of the flints I sow,
What shall I reap?

"Sorrow will come to their council-fires.
Weeping and fear
Will stalk to the heart of their great chief's lodge,
Year after year.

"When the moon rides on the purple hills,
Joyous of face,
Then do I give, to the men of my tribe,
Heads for the chase.

"When the chief's fire on the hilltop glows
Like a red star,
Then do I give, to the men of my tribe,
Heads for the war.

"Arrows of jasper, arrows of flint,
Arrows of slate.
Thus, in the door of my lodge, I nurse
Battle and hate!"

One evening, as he sat before his lodge looking seaward, his trained ears caught the sound of a faint call from the wooded hills behind. He did not turn his head or change his position. But he held his breath, the better to listen. Again came the cry, very weak and far away.

"It is the voice of a woman," he said, and smiled grimly.

Cheerless and desolately gray, the light of the east faded into the desolate gray of the sea. Black, like stalking shadows, stood the little islands of the headlands. The last of the light died out like the heart of fire in the shroud of cooling ashes. Again came the cry, whispering across the stillness.

"It may be the voice of a child, lost in the woods," said the arrow-maker. He rose from his seat and entered the lodge. He blew the coals of his fire back to a tiny flame. He drew up to it the burnt ends of faggots. Then he took in his hand another of his Eastern prizes — a broad-bladed knife — and started across the tumbled rocks toward the edge of the wood. Though old, he was still strong and tough of limb and courageous of

heart. Sure and swift he made his way through the heavy growth of spruce. Once he paused for the space of a heart-beat, to make sure of his direction. Again and again was the piteous cry repeated.

The old man kept up his tireless trot through underbrush and swamp, and displayed neither fatigue nor caution until he reached the bank of a narrow and turbulent stream. Here he drew into the shadow of a clump of firs. He lay close, and breathed heavily. By this time the moon had cleared the knolls. Its thin radiance flooded the wilderness. In the air was a whisper of gathering frost. The water of the little river twisted black and silver, and worried at the fanged rocks that tore it, with a voice of agony.

The crying had ceased; but the eyes of the old craftsman questioned the farther shore with a gaze steady and keen. There seemed to be something wrong with the shadows. A bent figure slipped down to the edge of the stream where the water spun in an eddy. It dropped on hands and knees and crawled to the black and unstable lip of the tide. Again the cry rang abroad, thin and high above the complaining tumult of the current. The watcher left his hiding-place and waded the

stream. At the edge of the spinning eddy he found a woman. She lay exhausted. A long shaft hung to her left shoulder. Blood trickled down her bare and rounded arm. The arrow-maker lifted her against his shoulder and bathed her face in the cool water until her eyelids lifted.

"Chief," she whispered, "pluck out the arrow."

He shook his head. His trade was with battle and death, but it was half a lifetime since he had felt the gushing of human blood on his hands.

"Father," she cried, faintly, "I pray you, pluck it out. The pain of it eats into my spirit. It sprang to me from a little wood, bitter and noiseless — and I heard not so much as the twang of the string."

The old man held her with his left arm. With strong and gentle fingers he worked the arrow in the wound. She quivered with the pain of it. Blood came more freely. He trembled at the hot touch of it across his fingers. He had dwelt so long in the quiet of his craft. Then the barbed blade came away from the wound, and he clutched it in his reeking palm. The woman sobbed with mingled pain and relief. The old man stepped into the moonlight and lifted the arrow to his eyes.

"It is none of my making," he said.

He heard the woman sobbing in the dark. Returning to her he bound her shoulder with his belt of dressed leather. Then, lifting her tenderly, he again forded the flashing current of the complaining river.

CHAPTER III.

THE FIGHT IN THE MEADOW

EVEN while the arrow-maker carried the wounded woman, arrows of the same shape as that which had stabbed her tender flesh were threatening the little village on the River of Three Fires. For days several war-parties from the South had been stealing through the country, raiding the lesser villages, and bent on destroying the nation of Soft Hand, and possessing his hunting-grounds. It was a laggard of one of the smaller bands that had wounded the woman. She had been far from her lodge at the time, seeking some healing herbs in the forest, and he had fired on her out of fear that she had discovered him and would warn her people. In her pain and fright, she had wandered coastward for several miles.

Silent as shadows, the invading warriors drew down toward the little meadow. Clouds were over the face of the white October moon. A cold mist floated in the valley. The leaders of the invaders,

lying low among the alders at the edge of the clearing, could see the unguarded people moving about their red fires. There was a scent of cooking deer-meat in the chill air. The chief of the attacking party lay on the damp grass and peered between the stems of the alders. He smiled exultantly. A quick slaughter, and then to a feast already prepared. He and his braves had enjoyed but poor fare during their long march.

So shall I leave him, sniffing the breath of the cooking fires, and turn to Wolf Slayer. Late of that afternoon Wolf Slayer had sallied forth in quest of something to kill. The woods had seemed deserted, and in less than an hour after his valorous exit from the camp, he had fallen asleep on a warm and sheltered strip of shingle. The river flashed in front, and on three sides brooded the crowding trees. When he awoke, the sun had set, and the river, a curved mirror for the western sky, was red as fire — or blood. Down-stream, about two hundred yards distant, a sombre bluff thrust its rocky breast into the water. The boy gazed at this, and his eyes widened with dismay. Then they narrowed with hate. Out of the shelter of the rocks and the shadows, and into the flaming waters, came figure after figure. They waded knee-deep, hip-deep, shoulder-deep, into that molten glory. Then

they swam; and the ripples washed back from gleaming neck and shoulder like lighter flames. One by one they stole from the shadow, swam the radiance, and again sought the shadow.

The boy trembled. The devils of fear and rage had their fingers on him. Spellbound, he watched close upon a hundred warriors make the passage of the river. Then he, too, sank noiselessly into the shelter of the trees. He was old enough to know what this meant, and his heart hurt him with its pent-up fury as he crawled through the underbrush. He was dismayed at the sound of his own breathing. He heard the distant rapping of a woodpecker, the fall of a spent leaf from an alder, and the soft breath of a dying wind; and the familiar sounds filled him with awe. And yet, but for these sounds, the whole world might be dead and the forest empty. Thought of the hundred fighting men moving steadily upon the unguarded homes of his people, with no more warning than the sound of a swamp-bird's flight, was like a nightmare. But presently the courage that had helped him slay the wolf came to him, and he thought of the glory to be won by saving the threatened village. He did not strengthen his heart to the task for sake of his mother's life and the lives of his playmates; but because the warriors would call him a hero.

Keeping just within the edge of the woods, he moved up-stream as speedily as he might without making any sound. He came upon a brown hare crouched beside a clump of ferns. He might have touched it with his hand, so unaware was it of his presence. He passed beneath an alder branch whereon perched a big slate-gray jay. It was not a foot from his back as he crawled under, and it did not take flight. But it eyed him intently, to make sure that he was not a fox. Sometimes he lay still for a little, listening. He heard nothing, though he started at a hundred fancied sounds. Twilight deepened into dusk, and dusk into gloom. The moon sailed up over the hills, and long banners of cloud passed across the face of it.

Presently Wolf Slayer came within sight of the fires of the village. The red light flashed on the angry river beyond, but left the lagoon in darkness. He crawled into the water inch by inch, scarcely breaking the calm, black surface. Then he swam, without noise of splashing, and landed at the foot of the meadow like a great beaver. He crawled into the red circle of one of the fires, and told his news to the braves gathered around. Men slipped from fire to fire. Without any unwonted disturbance, the whole village armed itself. Suddenly, with a fierce shout and a flight of arrows, the alders

were attacked. The invaders were checked at the very moment of their fancied victory.

The fighting scattered. Here three men struggled together in the shallows at the head of the lagoon. Farther out, one tossed his arms and sank into the black depths. In the open a half-score warriors bent their bows. Among the twisted stems of the alders they pulled and strangled, like beasts of prey. Back in the spruces they slew with clubs and knives, feeling for one another in the dark. Their war-cries and shouts of hate rang fearfully on the night air, and awoke unholy echoes along the valley.

In the front of the battle Wolf Slayer fought like a man. His lack of stature saved him from death more than once in that fearful encounter. Many a vicious blow glanced harmless, or missed him altogether, as he stumbled and bent among the alders. At first he fought with a long, flint knife, — the work of the old arrow-maker. But this was splintered in his hand by the murderous stroke of a war-club. He wrenched a spear from the clutch of a dying brave. A leaping figure went down before his unexpected lunge. It rolled over; then, queerly sprawling, it lay still. An arrow from the open ripped along an alder stem, rattled its shaft among the dry twigs, and struck a glanc-

ing blow on the young brave's neck. He stumbled, grabbing at the shadows. He fell — and forgot the fight.

In light and darkness the battle raged on. Wigwams were overthrown, and about the little fires warriors gave up their violent lives. At last the encampment was cleared, and saved from destruction; and those of the invaders who remained beside the trampled fires had ceased to menace. Along the black edges of the forest ran the cries and tumult of the struggle. Spent arrows floated on the lagoon. Red knives lifted and turned in the underbrush.

Wolf Slayer, dizzy and faint, crawled back to the lodges of his people. Other warriors were returning. They came exultant, with the lust of fighting still aflame in their eyes. Some strode arrogantly. Some crawled, as Wolf Slayer had. Some staggered to the home fires and reeled against the lodges, and some got no farther than the outer circle of light. And many came not at all.

The chief, with a great gash high on his breast (he had bared arms and breast for the battle), sought about the clearing and trampled fringe of alders, and at last, returning to the disordered camp, found Wolf Slayer. With a glad, high

shout of triumph, he lifted the boy in his arms and carried him home. The mother met them at the door of the lodge. In fearful silence the man and woman washed and bound the young brave's wound, and watched above his faint breathing with anxious hearts.

"Little one, strengthen your feet against the turn of the dark trail," whispered the mother. "See, our fires are bright to guide you back to your own people."

"Little chief, though this battle is ended, there are many good fights yet to come," whispered the father. "The fighters of the camp will have great need of you when we turn from our sleep. The old bear grumbles at the mouth of his den! — will you not be with us when we singe his fur?"

"Hush, hush!" cried the woman.

The boy, opening his eyes, turned the feet of his spirit from the dark trail.

"I saw the lights of the lost fires," he murmured, "and the hunting-song of dead braves was in my ears."

Wolf Slayer was nursed back to health and strength. Not once — not even at the edge of Death's domain — had his arrogance left him. It seemed that the days of suffering had but hardened

his already hard heart. Lad though he was, the villagers began to feel the weight of his hand upon them. He bullied and beat the other boys of the camp.

CHAPTER IV.

OUENWA SETS OUT ON A VAGUE QUEST

In the dead of winter — in that season of sweeping winds and aching skies, when the wide barrens lie uncheered of life from horizon to horizon — Soft Hand sent many of his warriors to the South. They followed in the "leads" of the great herds of caribou, going partly for the meat of the deer and partly to strike terror into the hearts of the Southern enemy. At the head of this party went Panounia, chief of the village on the River of Three Fires, and with him he took his hardy son, Wolf Slayer. Grim plans were bred on that journey. Grim tales were told around the big fire at night. The evil thing which Panounia hatched, with his bragging tongue, grew day by day and night by night. The hearts of the warriors were fired with the shameful flame. They dreamed things that had never happened, and wrought black visions out of the foolishnesses of their brains.

"The bear nods," they repeated, one to another,

after the chief had talked to them. "The bear nods, like an old woman over a pot of stew. But for Panounia, surely the men of the South would have scattered our lodges and led us, captive, to the playgrounds of their children and their squaws. Such a fate would warm the heart of Soft Hand, for is not our Great Chief an old woman himself?"

So, far from the eye and paw of the great bear, the foxes barked at his power. The moon heard it, and the silent trees, and the wind which carries no messages.

About this time Ouenwa, the grandson of Soft Hand, decided to make a journey of many days from the lodges at the head of Wind Lake to the Salt Water. He felt no interest in the Southern invasion. His eyes longed for a sight of the edges of the land and the breast of the great waters beyond. He had heard, in his inland home, rumour of mighty wooden canoes walled higher than the peak of a wigwam, and manned by loud-mouthed warriors from beyond the fogs and the rising sun. Some wiseacre, squatted beside the old chief's fire, hinted that the strangers were gods. He told many wonderful stories to back his argument. Soft Hand nodded. But Ouenwa smiled and shook his head.

"Would gods make such flights for the sake

of a few dried fishes and a few dressed pelts of beaver and fox?" he asked.

"The gods of trade would do so," replied the wiseacre. "Also," he added, "they slay at great distances by means of brown stakes which are flame-tongued and smoke-crowned and thunder-voiced."

"But do these gods not fight with knives — long knives and short?" inquired the lad. "I have heard it said that they sometimes fall out over the ordering of their affairs, even as we mortals do."

"And what wonderful knives they are," cried the old gossip. "They are coloured like ice. They gleam in the sunlight, like a flash of lightning against a cloud. They cut quicker than thought, and the red blood follows the edge as surely as the rains follow April."

"I have yet to see these gods," replied Ouenwa, "and in my heart I pray that they be but men, for the gods have proved themselves but cheerless companions to our people."

At that Soft Hand looked up. "Are the seasons not arranged to your liking, boy?" he asked, quietly.

"Nay, I did not mean that," cried Ouenwa; "but strange men promise better and safer company than strange gods."

Now he was journeying toward the ocean of

his dreaming and the ports of his desire. His eyes would search the headlands of fog. Out of the east, and the sun's bed, would lift the magic canoes of the strangers. But the journey was a hard one. The boy's only companion was a man of small stature and unheroic spirit, whom the old chief could well spare. They took their way down the frozen, snow-drifted lake, dragging their food and sleeping-bags of skin on a rough sledge. The wind came out of a steel-blue sky, unshifting and relentless. The dry snow ran before it over the level surface, and settled in thin, white ridges across their path. At the approach of night they sought the wooded shore, and in the shelter of the firs built their fire.

During the journey Ouenwa's guide proved but a cheerless companion. He had no heart for any adventure that might take him beyond the scent of his people's cooking-fires. He considered the conversation of his young master but a poor substitute for the gossip of the lodges. The scant fare of his own cooking left his stomach uncomforted. He hated the weariness of the march and dreaded the silence of the night. The cry of the wind across the tree-tops was, to his craven ear, the voice of some evil spirit. The barking of a fox on the hill set his limbs a-tremble. The howl

of a wolf struck him cold. The sudden leaping of a hare in the underbrush was enough to shake his poor wits with fright. But he feared the anger of Soft Hand more than all these terrors, and so held to Ouenwa and his mission.

On the third day of the journey the blue sky thickened to gray, the wind veered, and a great storm of snow overtook them. The snowflakes were large and damp. The travellers turned aside and climbed the bank of the river to the thickets of evergreens. With their rude axes of stone they broke away the fir boughs and reared themselves a shelter in the heart of the wood. Into this they drew their sledge of provisions and their sleeping-bags. Then they collected whatever dry fuel they could find — dead twigs and branches, tree-moss and birch bark — and, with his ingenious contrivance of bow and notched stick, Ouenwa started a blaze. They roasted dried venison by holding it to the flame on the ends of pointed sticks. Each cooked what he wanted, and ate it without talk. All creation seemed shrouded in silence. There was not a sound save the occasional soft hiss of a melting snowflake in the fire. The storm became denser. It was as if a sudden, colourless night had descended upon the wilderness, blotting out even the nearer trees with its reeling gray. The old re-

tainer crouched low, and gazed out at the storm from between his bony knees. His eyes fairly protruded with superstitious terror.

"What do you see?" inquired Ouenwa. The awe of the storm was creeping over his courage like the first film of ice over a bright stream. The old man did not move. He did not reply. Ouenwa drew closer to him, and heaped dry moss on the fire. It glowed high, and splashed a ruddy circle of light on the eddying snowflakes as on a wall.

"Hark!" whispered the old man. Yes, it was the sound of muffled footsteps, approaching behind the impenetrable curtain of the storm. The boy's blood chilled and thinned like water in his veins. He clutched his companion with frenzied hands. The fear of all the devils and shapeless beings of the wilderness was upon him. In the whirling snow loomed a great figure. It emerged into the glow of the fire.

"Ah! ah!" cried the old man, cackling with relief. For their visitor was nothing more terrible than a fellow human. The stranger greeted them cordially, and told them that, but for the glow of their fire, he would have been lost.

"But what are you doing here — an old man and a child?" he asked.

Ouenwa told him. He explained his identity,

and his intention of dwelling with the great arrow-maker of his grandfather's tribe to learn wisdom.

"Then are we well met," replied the other, "for my lodge is not half a spear-throw from the lodge of the arrow-maker. The old man has been as a father to me since the day he saved my wife from death. Now I hunt for him, and work at his craft, and have left the river to be near him. My children play about his lodge. My wife broils his fish and meat. Truly the old man has changed since the return of laughter and friendship to his lodge."

The stranger's name was Black Feather. He was taller than the average Beothic, and broad of shoulder in proportion. His hair was brown, and one lock of it, which was worn longer than the rest, was plaited with jet-black feathers. His garments consisted of a shirt of beaver skins that reached half-way between hip and knee, trousers of dressed leather, and leggins and moccasins of the same material. Around his waist was a broad belt, beautifully worked in designs of dyed porcupine quills. His head was uncovered.

Black Feather seated himself beside Ouenwa, and replied, good-naturedly, and at great length, to the youth's many questions. He told of the high-walled ships, and of how he had once seen four of these monsters swinging together in the

tide, with little boats plying between them, and banners red as the sunset flapping above them. He told of trading with the strangers, and described their manner of spreading out lengths of bright cloth, knives and hatchets of gray metal, and flasks of strong drink.

"Their knives are edged with magic," he said. "Many of them carry weapons called muskets, which kill at a hundred paces, and terrify at even a greater distance. But a nimble bowman might loose four arrows in the time that they are conjuring forth the spirit of the musket."

The storm continued throughout the day and night, but the morning broke clear. The travellers crawled from their weighted shelter and looked with gratitude upon the silver shield of the sun. After a hearty breakfast, they set out on the last stage of their journey. Their racquets of spruce wood woven across with strips of caribou hide sank deep in the feathery snow, and lifted a burden of it at every step. But they held cheerfully on their way. Black Feather walked ahead, and Pot Friend, the old gossip, brought up the rear. The thong by which they dragged the sledge passed over the right shoulder of each, and was grasped in the right hand. After several hours of tramping along the level of the river's valley, Black Feather turned

toward the western bank and led them into the woods. Presently, after experiencing several difficulties with the sledge, they emerged on the barren beyond the fringe of timber. They ascended a treeless knoll that rounded in front of them, blindingly white against the pale sky. Old Pot Friend grumbled and sighed, and might just as well have been on the sledge, for all the pulling he did. On reaching the top of the knoll Black Feather swept his arm before him with a gesture of finality. "Behold!" he said.

An exclamation of wonder sprang to Ouenwa's lips, and died — half-uttered. Before him lay a wedge of foam-crested winter sea beating out against a far, glass-clear horizon. To right and left were sheer rocks and timbered valleys, wave-washed coves, ice-rimmed islands, and crouching headlands. Even Pot Friend forgot his weariness and shortness of breath for the moment, and surveyed the outlook in silence. It was many years since he had been so far afield. His little soul was fairly stunned with awe. But presently his real nature reasserted itself. He pointed with his hand.

"Smoke!" he exclaimed. "And the roofs of two lodges. Good!"

Black Feather smiled. Ouenwa did not hear the old man's cry of joy.

"I see the edge of the world," he said.

"But the ships come over it, and go down behind it," replied Black Feather.

"That is foolishness," said Pot Friend, who was filled with his old impudence at sight of the fire and the lodges. "No canoe would venture on the great salt water. I say it, who have built many canoes. And, if they voyaged so far, they would slip off into the caves of the Fog Devils. I believe nothing of all these stories of the strangers and their winged canoes."

"Silence!" cried the boy, turning on him with flashing eyes. "What do you know of how far men will venture? — you, who have but heart enough to stir a pot of broth and lick the spoon."

"I have brought you safely through great dangers," whined the old fellow.

Montaw, the aged arrow-maker, welcomed his visitors cordially, and was grateful for the kind messages from his chief, Soft Hand, and for the gift of dressed leather. He accepted the charge and education of Ouenwa. He set the unheroic Pot Friend to the tasks of carrying water and wood, and snaring hares and grouse. He taught Ouenwa the craft of chipping flints into shapes for spear-heads and arrow-heads, and the art of painting, in ochre, on leather and birch bark.

CHAPTER V.

THE ADMIRAL OF THE HARBOUR

Spring brought ice-floes and bergs from the north, and millions of Greenland seals. For weeks the little bay on which Montaw and Black Feather had their lodges was choked with battering ice-pans and crippled bergs. Many of the tribesmen came to the salt water to kill the seals. Soft Hand sent a canoe-load of beaver pelts to Ouenwa, so that the boy might trade with the strangers when they arrived out of the waste of waters.

At last summer came to the great Bay of Exploits, and with it many ships — ships of England, of France, of Spain, and of Portugal. All were in quest of the world-renowned codfish. By this time the ice had rotted, and drifted southward. The first craft to enter Wigwam Harbour (as the English sailors called the arrow-maker's bay) was the Devon ship, *Heart of the West.* Her master, John Trowley, was an ignorant, hard-headed, and

hard-fisted old mariner of the roughest type; but, by the laws of those waters, he was Admiral of Wigwam Harbour for that season. It was not long before every harbour had its admiral, — in every case the master of the first vessel to drop anchor there. The shores were portioned off in strips, so that each ship might have a place for drying-stages, whereon to cure its fish. Then the great business of garnering that rich harvest of the north began, amid the rattling of boat-gear, the shouting of orders in many tongues, and the volleying of oaths. Ouenwa, watching the animated scene, was fired with a desire to voyage in one of the strange vessels, and to taste the world that lay beyond the rim of the sea.

One day, soon after their arrival, three men from the *Heart of the West* ascended the twisting path to the arrow-maker's lodge. The old craftsman and Black Feather and Ouenwa advanced to meet them without fear, for up to that time the adventurers and the natives had been on the best of terms. The strangers smiled and bowed to the Beothics. They displayed a handful of coloured glass beads, a roll of red cloth, and a few sticks of tobacco. Old Montaw's eyes glistened at sight of the Virginian leaf. He had already learned the trick of drawing on the stem of a pipe and blowing

fragrant clouds of smoke into the air. He said that to do so added to the profundity of his thoughts. And all winter he had gone without a puff. He produced a mink skin from his lodge and exchanged it for one of the coveted sticks of tobacco. Black Feather also traded, giving skins of mink, fox, and beaver for a piece of cloth, a dozen beads, and a knife. But Ouenwa stood aside and watched the strangers. One of them he recognized as the great captain who shouted and swore at the captains of the other ships, and pointed out to them places where they might anchor their ships — for it was none other than Master John Trowley. The young man with the gold lace in his hat, and the long sword at his side — surely, he, too, was a chief, despite his quiet voice and smooth face. Ouenwa's surmise was correct. The youth was Master Bernard Kingswell, only son of a wealthy widow of Bristol. His father, who had been knighted a few years before his premature death, had been a merchant of sound views and adventurous spirit. The son inherited the adventurous spirit, and was free from the bondage of the counting-house. The third of the party was a common seaman. That much Ouenwa could detect at a glance.

Master Kingswell stepped over to the young Beothic.

"Trade?" he inquired, kindly, displaying a string of glass beads in the palm of his hand. Ouenwa shook his head. He knew only such words of English as Montaw had taught him, and he feared that they would prove entirely inadequate for the purpose that was in his mind. However, he would try. He pointed to Trowley's ship, and then to the far and glinting horizon.

"Take Ouenwa?" he whispered, scarce above his breath.

"To see the ship?" inquired Master Kingswell.

"Off," replied Ouenwa, with a wave of his arms. "Out, off!"

Kingswell looked puzzled, and made no reply. The young Beothic bent a keen glance upon him; then he tapped himself on the chest.

"Take Ouenwa," he whispered. He plucked the Englishman by the coat. "Come, chief, come," he cried, eagerly.

Kingswell followed to the nearest lodge. Ouenwa pulled aside the flap of caribou hide that covered the doorway, and motioned for the visitor to enter. For a second the Englishman hesitated. He had heard many tales of the treachery of these people. What menace might not lurk in the gloom of the round, fur-scented lodge? But he did not lack courage; and, before the other had time to

notice the hesitation, he stepped within. The flap of rawhide fell into place behind him. Save for the red glow that pulsated from the hearthstone in the centre of the floor, and the fingers of sunlight that thrust through the cracks in the apex of the roof, the big lodge was unilluminated.

"What do you want?" asked Master Kingswell, with his shoulders against the slope of the roof and a tentative hand on his sword-hilt. For answer, Ouenwa held a torch of rolled bark to the fire until it flared smoky red, and then lifted it high. The light of it flooded the sombre place, showing up the couches of skins, Montaw's copper pot, and a great bale of pelts. The boy pointed to the pelts. Then he pressed the palm of his hand against the Englishman's breast.

"Ouenwa give beaver," he said. "Take Ouenwa Englan'. Much good trade."

Kingswell understood. But he saw obstacles in the way of carrying out the young Beothic's wish. The other savages might object. They might look on it as a case of kidnapping. Lads had been kidnapped before from the eastern bays, and, though they had been well treated, and made pets of in England, their people had ceased to trade with the visitors, and all their friendship had turned to treachery and hostility. On the other hand,

he should like to take the youth home with him. He tried to explain his position to Ouenwa, but failed signally. They parted, however, with the most friendly feelings toward one another.

After the interview with Kingswell, Ouenwa spent most of his time gazing longingly at the ships in the bay, and picturing the life aboard them, and the countries from which they had come. One morning Kingswell called to him from the land-wash. He ran down, delighted at the attention. Kingswell pointed to a small, open boat which the carpenter of the *Heart of the West* had just completed. Then, by signs and a few words, he told Ouenwa that he was going northward in the little craft, to explore the coast, and that he would be back with the fleet before the birch leaves were yellow. Ouenwa begged to be taken on the expedition and afterward across the seas. He offered his canoe-load of beaver skins. He tried to tell of his great desire to see the lodges of the strangers, and to learn their speech. He did not want to live the life of his own people. Kingswell caught the general trend of the Beothic's remarks. He had no objection to driving a good bargain. So he made clear to him that he was to come alongside the ship, with the beaver skins, on the following night.

The sky was black with clouds, and a fog wrapped the harbour, when Ouenwa stepped into his loaded canoe and pushed out toward the spot where Trowley's ship lay at anchor. He had dragged his skins from Montaw's lodge earlier in the night, without disturbing the slumbers of either his guardian or Pot Friend. Age had dulled their ears and thickened their sleep. He paddled noiselessly. Sounds of roistering came to his ears, muffled by the fog. Presently the admiral's ship loomed close ahead. Lights blinked fore and aft. She seemed a tremendous thing to the lad, though in truth she was but of one hundred tons. Singing and laughter were ripe aboard.

For the first time a fear of the strangers took possession of Ouenwa. Even his trust in Kingswell faltered. He ceased paddling, and listened, with bated breath, to the hoarse shouts of merriment and the clapping oaths. Then curiosity overcame his fear. He slid his long canoe under the stem of the *Heart of the West.* A cheering glow of candlelight yellowed the fog above him. He stood up and found that his head was on a level with the sill of a square port. It stood open. He heard Kingswell's voice, and Trowley's. The master-mariner's was gusty and argumentative. It broke out at intervals, like the flapping of a sail,

Ouenwa steadied himself with his hands on the casing of the open port, and lifted to tiptoe. Now he could see into the little cabin, and hear the conversation of its inmates. Happily for his feelings, he could understand only a word or two of that conversation. He saw Kingswell and the master of the ship seated opposite one another at a small table. Upon the table stood candles in metal sticks, a bottle, and glasses. The old sea-dog's bearded face was working with excitement. He slapped his great flipper-like hand on the polished surface of the board.

"Now who be master o' this ship?" he bawled. "Tell me that, will 'e. Who be master?"

"I am the owner, you'll kindly remember, John Trowley," replied Kingswell, with a ring of anger in his voice, but a smile on his lips.

"Ay, ye be owner, but John Trowley be skipper," roared the other, glaring so hard that his round, pale eyes fairly bulged from his face. "An' no dirty redskin sails in ship o' mine unless as a servant, or afore the mast, — no, not if he pays his passage with all th' pelts in Newfoundland."

"You are mistaken, my friend," replied Kingswell. "I'll carry fifty of these people back to Bristol, if it so pleases me."

"I'll put ye in irons, my fine gentleman," retorted the seaman.

"You are drunk," cried the young adventurer, drawing back his right hand as if to strike the great, scowling face that bent toward him across the table.

"Drunk, d'ye say! An' ye'd lift yer hand against the ship's master, would ye?" shouted Trowley. He lurched forward, and a knife flashed above the overturned bottle and glasses.

Ouenwa emitted a horrified scream, and hurled his paddle spear-wise into the cabin. The rounded point of the blade caught Trowley on the side of the head, and sent him crashing to the deck.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FANGS OF THE WOLF SLAYER

WHEN Trowley recovered consciousness, he was lying in his berth, with a bandage around his head. Kingswell looked in at him, smiling in a way that the old mariner was beginning to fear as well as hate.

"I hope you are feeling more amiable since your sleep," said Kingswell.

Trowley muttered a word or two of apology, damned the rum, and asked the time of day. His recollections of the argument in the cabin were hazy and fragmentary.

In reply to his question the gentleman told him that the sun was well up, the fog cleared, and that he was having his boat provisioned for the coast-wise exploration trip.

"And mind you," he added, grimly, "that the eighty beaver skins which are now being stowed away in my berth are my property."

"Certainly, sir," replied Trowley. "An' may

I ask how ye come by such a power o' trade in a night-time?"

"Yes, you may ask," replied Kingswell. He grinned at the wounded skipper for fully a minute, leaning on the edge of the bunk. Then he said: "I'll now bid you farewell until October. Don't sail without me, good Master Trowley, and look not upon the rum of the Indies when that same is red. A knife-thrust given in drunkenness might lead to the gallows."

He turned and nimbly scaled the companion-ladder, leaving the shipmaster speechless with rage.

Half an hour later the staunch little craft *Pelican* spread her square sail and slid away from the *Heart of the West.* She was manned by old Tom Bent, young Peter Harding, and Richard Clotworthy. Master Bernard Kingswell sat at the tiller, with Ouenwa beside him. Their provisions, extra clothing, arms, and ammunition were stowed amidships and covered with sail-cloth. The sun was bright, and the sky blue. The wind bowled them along at a clipping pace. From a mound above the harbour Black Feather gazed after them under a level hand. In the little harbour Trowley's ship alone swung in her anchorage. The others had run out to the fishing-grounds, — for in those days the fishing was done over the sides of the

ships, and not from small boats. On either side the brown shores fell back, and the dancing waters widened and widened. White gulls screamed above and around them, flashing silvery wings, snowy breasts, and inquisitive eyes.

Ouenwa looked back, and then ahead, and felt a great misgiving. But Kingswell patted him on the shoulder, and the sailors nodded their heads at him and grinned.

Soon they were among the fleet. The ungainly, high-sterned vessels rocked and bobbed under naked spars. The great business that had brought them so far was going forward. Along both sides of every ship were hung barrels, and in each barrel was stationed a man with two or more fishing-lines. Splashing desperately, the great fish were hauled up, unhooked, and tossed to the deck behind. As the little *Pelican* slid by, the fishers paused in their work to cheer her, and wave their caps. The masters shouted "God speed" from their narrow quarter-decks, and doffed their hats. Kingswell waved them gracious farewells; Ouenwa gazed spellbound toward the widening outlook; and Tom Bent trimmed the sail to a nicety.

They passed headland after headland, rocky island after rocky island, cove after cove. The shores behind them turned from brown to purple,

and from purple to azure. The waves ran higher and the wind freshened. Kingswell shaped the boat's course a few points to the northward. The stout little craft skipped like a lamb and plunged like some less playful creature. Spray flew over her blunt bows, and the sailors laughed like children, and called her a brave lass, and many other endearing names, as if she were human.

"A smart wench, sir," said Tom Bent to Master Kingswell. The commander nodded, and shifted the tiller knowingly. His blue eyes were flashing with the excitement of the speed and motion. His bright, pale hair streamed in the wind. He leaned forward, to pick out the course through a group of small islands that cluttered the bay ahead of them. He gave an order, and the seamen hauled on the wet sheet. But Ouenwa did not share the high spirits of his companions. A terrible, unknown feeling got hold of him. His dark cheeks lost their bloom. Kingswell glanced at him.

"Let it go, lad," he said. "A sailor is made in this way. Tom, pass me along a blanket."

With his unemployed hand he fixed a comfortable rest for the boy, and helped him to a drink of water. For an hour or more he maintained a hold on the young Beothic's belt, for, by this time, the soaring and sinking of the *Pelican* were enough to

unsteady even a seasoned mariner. As for Ouenwa! — the poor lad simply clung to the gunwale with the grip of despair, and entertained regretful, beautiful visions of level shores and unshaken hills. Tom Bent eyed him kindly.

"The young un has it wicked, sir," he said. "Maybe, like as not, a swig o' rum ud sweeten his bilge, sir."

Kingswell acted on the old tar's advice. The rank liquor completed the boy's breakdown. In so doing it served the purpose which Bent had intended. The sufferer was soon sleeping soundly, already half a sailor.

When Ouenwa next took interest in his surroundings, the *Pelican* had the surf of a sheer coast close aboard on her port side. She was heading due north. The sun was half-way down his western slope. Behind the *Pelican's* bubbling wake, hills and headlands and high, naked barrens lay brown and purple and smoky blue. In front, and on the right hand, loomed surf-rimmed islands and flashed the innumerable, ever-altering yet unchanged hills and valleys of the deep. Tom Bent was now at the tiller, and Kingswell was in the bows, gazing intently at the austere coast. Ouenwa crawled over the thwarts and cargo of provisions, under the straining sail, and crouched beside him.

His head felt light and his stomach painfully empty, but again life seemed worth living and the adventure worth while.

About an hour before sunset the *Pelican* ran into a little cove, and her two grappling anchors were heaved overboard. She lay within five yards of the land-wash, swinging on an easy tide. Ouenwa sprang into the water and waded ashore. It was a dismal anchorage, with only a strip of shingle, and grim cliffs rising in front and on either hand. But at the base of the cliffs, in fissures of the rock, grew stunted spruce-trees and birches. Ouenwa soon found a little stream dribbling a zigzag course from the levels above. It gathered, clear and cold, in a shallow basin at the foot of the rock, and from there spilled over into the obliterating sand.

By this time the others were ashore. Clotworthy hacked down a couple of armfuls of the spruce and birch shrubs with his cutlass, and started a fire. Then he filled a pot from the little well and commenced preparations for a meal. The other seamen erected a shelter, composed of a sail and three oars, against the cliff. Kingswell and Ouenwa sat on a convenient boulder, and the commander filled a long pipe with tobacco and lit it at a brand from the fire. He seemed in high spirits, and in a mood to further his young companion's education. Point-

ing to the roll of Virginian leaf, from which he had cut the charge for his pipe, he said, "Tobacco." Ouenwa repeated it many times, and nodded his comprehension. Then Kingswell pointed to old Tom Bent, who was watching Clotworthy drop lumps of dried venison into the pot of water.

"Boatswain," he said.

Ouenwa mastered the word, as well as the term "able seamen," applied to Clotworthy and Peter Harding. By that time the stew was ready for them. They were all sound asleep, under their frail shelter, before the last glimmer of twilight was gone from the sky.

It was very early when Ouenwa awoke. A pale flood of dawn illumined the tent and the recumbent forms of Master Kingswell and Clotworthy. Tom Bent and Harding were not in their places. The boy wondered at that, but was about to close his eyes again, when he was startled to his feet by a shrill cry that went ringing overhead and echoing along the cliffs. He darted from the tent, with Kingswell and Clotworthy hot on his heels. Bent and Harding were on the extreme edge of the beach, with their backs to the sea, staring upward. Ouenwa and the others turned their faces in the same direction. They were amazed to see about a dozen native warriors on the cliff above

them, fully armed, and evidently deeply interested in what was going on in the little cove. One of them was pointing to the *Pelican,* and talking vehemently to the brave beside him. In two of them Ouenwa recognized young Wolf Slayer, and his father, the chief of the village on the River of Three Fires. He called up to them, and asked what brought them so far from their village.

"We are at the salt water to take the fish," replied Wolf Slayer, "and we saw the smoke of your fire before the last darkness. But what do you with the great strangers, little Dreamer?"

"They are my friends," replied Ouenwa, "and I am voyaging with them to learn wisdom."

"What are you talking about?" asked Kingswell.

The lad tried to explain. He pointed to the tent and provisions and then to the boat. "Put in," he said.

At a word from Kingswell the three sailors quickly dismantled their night's shelter and carried the sail, the oars, and such food and blankets as they had brought ashore, out to the *Pelican.* At that the shrill cry rang out again, and echoed along the cliffs.

"What does that mean?" inquired Kingswell.

"Bad," replied Ouenwa, shortly.

"What is in your fine canoe, little Dreamer?" called Wolf Slayer.

"Our food and our clothing, little Fox Stabber," Ouenwa cried back, with indignation in his voice.

"Your dreams must have unsettled your wits, my friend," replied Wolf Slayer, "or you would not talk so loud before a chief of the tribe."

Just then, in answer to the cry that had sounded so dismally across the dawn a few moments before, five more warriors, armed with bows, appeared on the top of the cliff — for the cry was the hunting-call of the tribe.

"Do you fish with war-bows?" shouted Ouenwa. "And why do you summon to trade with the cry of the hunt?"

"You ask too many questions, even for a seeker of wisdom," replied the other youth, mockingly.

"Does Soft Hand, the great bear, slumber, that the foxes bark with such assurance?" retorted Ouenwa.

By this time the *Pelican* was ready to put out of the cove. Both anchors were up, and Harding and Clotworthy held her off with the oars. Old Tom Bent was also in the boat, busy with something beside the mast. Suddenly a bow-string twanged, and an arrow buried its flint head in the sand at Kingswell's feet. Another struck a stone

and, glancing out, rattled against Harding's oar. Kingswell and Ouenwa backed hastily into the water. Above them, silhouetted against the lightening sky, they saw bending bows and downward thrust arms. Then, with a clap and a roar, and a gust of smoke, old Tom Bent replied to the warriors on the cliff. The echoes of the discharge bellowed around and around the rock-girt harbour. Ouenwa and Kingswell sprang through the smoke and climbed aboard, and the seamen pushed into deep water and then bent to their oars. But the *Pelican* proved a heavy boat to row, with her blunt bows and comfortable beam. She surged slowly beyond the cloud of bitter smoke that the musket had hung in the windless air. Clear of that, the voyagers looked for their treacherous assailants — and, behold, the great warriors were not to be seen. Kingswell and the three seamen laughed, as if the incident were a fine joke; but Ouenwa was hot with shame and anger. He stood erect and shouted abuse to the deserted cliff-top. He called upon Wolf Slayer and Panounia to show their cowardly faces. He threatened them with the displeasure of Soft Hand and with the anger of the English. A figure appeared on the sky-line.

"You speak of Soft Hand," it cried. "Know you, then, that Soft Hand set out on the Long Trail

four suns ago, when he marched into my village to dispute my power. I, Panounia, am now the great chief of the people. So carry yourself accordingly, O whelp without teeth and without a den to crawl into. Whose hand has overthrown the lodge of the totem of the Black Bear? Mine! Panounia's! Soft Hand has fallen under it as his son, your father, succumbed to it when you were a squalling babe." He paused for a moment, and held out a gleaming knife, with its point toward the *Pelican.* "The totem of the Wolf now hangs from the great lodge," he cried.

Quick and noiseless as a breath, the edge of the cliff was lined with warriors. Like a sudden flight of birds their arrows flashed outward and downward.

"Lie down!" cried Kingswell. With a strong hand he snatched Ouenwa to the bottom of the boat. Harding and Clotworthy sprawled forward between the thwarts. Only Tom Bent, crouched beside the naked mast, did not move. The arrows thumped against plank and gunwale. They pierced the cargo. They glanced from tiller and sweep and mast. One, turning from the rail, struck Bent on the shoulder. He cursed angrily, but did not look for the wound. His match was burning with a thread of blue smoke and a spark of red fire. His

clumsy gun was geared to the rail by an impromptu swivel of cords. He lay flat and elevated the muzzle.

"Steady her," he said, softly. "She's driftin' in."

Kingswell sprang forward to one of the oars, thrust it to the bottom, and held the boat as steady as might be. Arrows whispered around him. He shouted a challenge to the befeathered warriors above him. Tom touched the slow-match to the quick fuse. Something hissed and sizzled. A plume of smoke darted up. Then, with a rebound that shook the boat from stem to stern, the gun hurled forth its lead, and fire, and black breath of hate.

"Double charge, sir," gasped Tom Bent, from where he sagged against the mast. The kick of his musket had hurt him more than the blow from the arrow.

Again the *Pelican* fought her way toward the open waters, with Harding and Clotworthy pulling lustily at the sweeps. Kingswell, flushed and joyful, sat at the tiller and headed her for the channel, through which the tide was running landward at a fair pace. Bent was busy reloading his firearm. Ouenwa stood in the stern-sheets, with his bow in his left hand and an arrow on the string. A

breath of wind brushed the smoke aside and cleared the view. Ouenwa pointed to the beach, and gave vent to a shrill whoop of triumph. The others looked, and saw a huddled shape of bronzed limbs and painted leather at the foot of the rock.

"One more red devil for hell," muttered the boatswain. "I learned mun to shoot his pesky sticks at a Bristol gentleman."

As if in answer, an arrow bit a splinter from the mast, not six inches from the old man's head. Ouenwa's bow bent, and sprang straight. The shaft flew with all the skill that Montaw had taught the boy, and with all the hate that was in his heart for the big murderer on the cliff. Every man of the little company narrowed his eyes to follow the flight of it. They saw it curve. They saw a warrior drop his bow from his menacing hand and sink to his knees.

"The wolf falls," cried Ouenwa, in his own tongue. "The wolf bites the moss. Who, now, is the wolf slayer?"

The Englishmen cheered again and again, and the good boat *Pelican,* urged forward by triumphant sinews, won through the channel and swam into the outer waters.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SILENT VILLAGE

As soon as the *Pelican* was out of arrow-shot of the cliff, the Beothics disappeared. Ouenwa laid aside his bow with a sigh of regret. Then he tried to repeat to Kingswell what he had heard from Panounia. After a deal of questioning, sign-making, and mental exertion, the Englishman gathered the information that treachery and murder had taken place up the river, and that his young friend hated the new leader of the tribe with a bitter hatred. He did not wonder at the bitterness. He looked at the young savage's flushed face and glowing eyes with sympathy and admiration. His liking for the boy had grown in every hour of their companionship, and, by this time, had developed into a decided fondness.

"Sit down, lad, and let your guns cool," he said, with a light hand on the other's knee. "Your enemies are my enemies," he continued, "and we'll fight the dogs every time we see 'em."

Ouenwa sat quiet and tried to look calm. He was soothed by the evident kindliness of Kingswell's tone and manner, though he had failed to translate his speech. The men on the thwarts had caught the words, however. They nodded heavily to one another.

"Ye say the very word what was in my mind, sir," spoke up Tom Bent, "an', if I may make so bold as to say further, your enemies be your servants' enemies, sir. Therefore the young un's enemies must be our enemies, holus bolus." The other sailors nodded decidedly. "Therefore," continued Tom Bent, "all they cowardly heathen aft on the cliff has to reckon, hereafter, with Thomas Bent an' the crew o' this craft."

"Well spoken, Tom," replied Kingswell, with the smile that always won him the heart and hand of every man he favoured with it, — and of every maid, too, more than likely. "But we can't enthuse on empty stomachs. Pass out the bread and the cold meat," he added.

For fully two hours the *Pelican* rocked about within half a mile of her night's anchorage. Kingswell was not in a desperate hurry, and so his men pulled at the oars just enough to hold the boat clear of the rocks. A sharp lookout was kept along

the coast, but not a sight nor a sound of the Beothics rewarded their vigilance.

"They be up to some devilment, ye may lay to that," said Tom Bent.

At last a wind fluttered to them out of the nor'-east, and the square sail was hoisted and sheeted home. Again the *Pelican* dipped her bows and wet her rail on the voyage of exploration.

After two hours of sailing, and just when they were off the mouth of a little river and a fair valley, a fog overtook them. Kingswell was for running in, but Ouenwa objected.

"Panounia follow," he said. "He great angry. Drop irons," he added, pointing to the little anchors.

"Panounia is wounded. You winged him yourself," replied Kingswell. "He could not follow us around that coast, lad, at the clip we were coming."

Ouenwa considered the words with puckered brows. They were beyond him. The commander pointed shoreward.

"All safe," he said. "All safe."

"No, no," cried the lad. "All kill. No safe."

During this controversy the sail had been partly lowered, and the *Pelican* had been slowly running landward with the fog.

Kingswell looked from the young Beothic to the seamen with a smile of whimsical uncertainty.

"Out o' the mouths o' babes an' sucklin's," remarked Tom Bent, with his deep-set eyes fixed on nothing in particular. Kingswell's glance rested, for a moment, on the ancient mariner.

"Lower away," he said. The sail flapped down, and was quickly stowed. "Let go the anchors," he commanded. The grapplings splashed into the gray waves. The fog crawled over the boat and shut her off from land and sky. With a last dreary whistle, the wind died out entirely.

"Rip me!" exclaimed Master Kingswell, "but here is caution that smells remarkably like cowardice." Fretfully sighing, he produced his pipe, tobacco, and tinder-box. Soon the fragrant smoke was mingling with the fog. The young commander leaned back, taking his comfort where he could, like the courageous gentleman that he was. The habit of burning Virginian tobacco was an expensive one, confined to the wealthy and the adventurous. The seamen, who, of course, had not yet acquired it, watched their captain with open interest. When a puff was blown through the nostrils, or sent aloft in a series of rings, they nudged one another, like children at a show. By this time the walls of fog had made of the *Pelican* a tiny, lost world by itself. Suddenly Ouenwa raised his hand. "Sh!" he whispered. Kingswell removed the pipe-stem from

his mouth, and inclined his head toward the hidden river and valley. All strained their ears, to wrest some sound from the surrounding gray other than the lapping of the tide along the unseen land-wash. But they could hear nothing.

"Village," whispered Ouenwa, pointing landward.

"But we saw no signs of a village," protested Kingswell, gently.

"Village," repeated the lad. "Ouenwa hear. Ouenwa smell."

Immediately the four Englishmen began to sniff the fog, like hounds taking a scent on the wind. But their nostrils were not the nostrils of either hounds or Beothics. They sniffed to no purpose. They shook their heads. Kingswell wagged a chiding finger at their keen-nosed companion. The boy read the inference of the gesture, and flushed indignantly.

"Village," he whispered, shrilly. "Village, village, village."

Kingswell looked distressed. The sailors grinned leniently at the determined boy. They had great faith in their own noses, had those mariners of Bristol and thereabouts. Ouenwa, frowning a little, sank into a moody contemplation of the fog.

"This is dull," exclaimed Kingswell, after a half-

hour of silence. "Tom, pipe us a stave, like a good lad."

The boatswain scratched his head reflectively. Presently he cleared his throat with energy.

"Me voice be a bit husky, sir, to what it once were," he murmured, "but I'll do me best — an' no sailorman can say fairer nor that."

Straightway he struck into a heroic ballad of a sea-fight, in a high, tottering tenor. The song dealt with Spanish swagger and English daring, with bloody decks, falling spars, and flying splinters. Harding joined in the chorus with a booming bass. Clotworthy and the commander soon followed. Kingswell's voice was clear and strong and wonderfully melodious. Ouenwa's eyes glowed and his muscles trembled. Though the words held no meaning for him, the rollicking, dashing swing of the tune fired his excitable blood. He forgot all about Panounia, and the suspected village on the river so near at hand ceased to trouble him. He beat time to the singing with his moccasined feet, and clapped his hands together in rhythmic appreciation of his comrades' efforts. In time the ballad was finished. The last member of the craven crew of the *Teressa Maria* had tasted English steel and been tossed to the sharks. Then Master Kingswell sprang to his feet and sang a sentimental ditty.

It was of roses and fountains, of latticed windows and undying affection. The air was captivating. The singer's voice rang tender and clear. Old Tom Bent remembered lost years. Harding thought of a Devon orchard, and of a Devon lass at work harvesting the ruddy fruit. Clotworthy saw a cottage beside a little wood, and a woman and a little child gazing seaward and westward from the door.

For several seconds after the last note had died away, the little company remained silent and motionless, fully occupied with its various thoughts. Ouenwa was the first to break the spell of the song. He laid his hand on Kingswell's arm with a quick gesture, and leaned toward him.

"Canoe," he whispered.

The sound that had caught Ouenwa's attention was repeated — a short rap, like the inadvertent striking of a paddle against a gunwale. They all heard it, and, with as little noise as possible, set to work at getting out cutlasses and loading muskets. Kingswell crawled forward and whispered with old Tom Bent. The boatswain nodded and turned to Harding. That sturdy young seaman crawled to the bows and placed his hands on the hawser of the forward anchor. He looked aft. Kingswell, who had returned to his seat at the

tiller, leaned over the stern and cut the manilla rope that tethered the boat at that end. Harding immediately pulled on his rope until he was directly over the light bow anchor. Then, strongly and slowly, and without noise, he brought the four-fingered iron up and into the bows. They were free of the bottom, anyway, and with the loss of only one anchor. Kingswell breathed a sigh of relief.

The *Pelican* drifted, and the crew stared into the fog, with wide eyes and alert ears. Then, to seaward and surely not ten yards away, sounded a plover-call. Kingswell signalled to Bent to man the seaward side and Clotworthy and Harding the other. They rested the barrels of their great match-locks on the gunwales. Suddenly the prow of a canoe pierced the curtain of fog not four yards from Tom Bent. He touched the match to the short fuse. There was a terrific report, and a chorus of wild yells. In the excitement that followed, the others discharged their pieces. Kingswell grabbed an oar, slipped it into a notch beside the tiller and began to "scull" the boat seaward. The men reloaded their muskets and peered into the fog. They heard splashings and cries on all sides, but could see nothing. Ouenwa, standing

erect, discharged arrow after arrow at the hidden enemy.

The splashings grew fainter, and the cries ceased entirely. Kingswell passed the oar which he had been using to Harding, and told the men to lay aside their muskets and row. Ouenwa let fly his last arrow, in the names of his murdered father and grandfather.

For a long and weary time the *Pelican* lay off the hidden land, shrouded in fog and silence. A few hours before sunset a wind from the west found her out, drove away the fog, and disclosed the sea and the coast and the open sky.

"Pull her head 'round," commanded Kingswell, "and hoist the sail. We are going back to have a look at that village."

The men obeyed eagerly. They were itching for a chance to repay the savages for the fright in the dark.

CHAPTER VIII.

A LETTER FOR OUENWA

Two headlands were rounded before the valley of the river opened again to the eyes of the adventurers. The brown water of the stream stole down and merged into the dancing, wind-bitten sea. The gradual hillsides, green-swarded, basked in the golden light. The lower levels of the valley were already in shadow. No sign of man, or of his habitation, was disclosed to the voyagers.

"A fair spot," remarked Kingswell. "I feel a desire stirring within me to stretch my legs on that grassy bank. What do you say to the idea, Tom?"

The old fellow grinned. "'Twould be pleasant, sir, an' no mistake," he replied — "a little walk along the brook, with our hands not very far from our hangers. Ay, sir, Tom Bent's for a spell o' nater worship."

The boat ran in, and was beached on the sand well within the mouth of the river. Harding and Clotworthy, with loaded muskets, were left on

guard, and the other three, fully armed, started along the bank of the stream. They advanced cautiously, with a sharp lookout on every clump of bushes and every spur of rock. A kingfisher dropped from its perch above the water and flew up-stream with shrill clamour. They turned a bend of the little river and halted short in their track with muttered exclamations. Before them, on a level meadow between the brown waters of the stream and the dark green wall of the forest, stood half a dozen wigwams. The place seemed deserted. They scanned the dark edge of the wood and the brown hills behind. They peered everywhere, expecting to catch the glint of hostile eyes at every turn. But neither grove nor hill, nor silent lodge, disclosed any sign of life.

"Where the devil are they?" exclaimed Kingswell, thoroughly perplexed.

Ouenwa smiled, and swept his hand in a half-circle.

"Watch us," he remarked, nodding his head. "Yes, watch us."

"He means they are lying around looking at us," said Kingswell to the boatswain. "Rip me, but I don't relish the chance of one of those stone-tipped arrows in my vitals."

Tom Bent glanced about him in visible trepida-

tion. Ouenwa noticed it, and pointed to the seaman's musket. "No 'fraid," he said. "Shoot."

"What at?" inquired Bent.

"Make shoot," cried the boy, indicating the silent wood, dusky in the gathering shadows.

"He wants you to fire into the wood, and frighten them out," said Kingswell.

"If they be there, I'm for lettin' 'em stay there," replied Tom.

However, he fixed his murderous weapon in its support, aimed at the edge of the forest beyond the wigwams, and fired. The flame cut across the twilight like a red sword; a dismal howl arose and quivered in the air. It was answered from the hilltops on both sides of the stream.

Before the echoes had died away, Ouenwa was inside the nearest lodge. Kingswell followed, and found him dismantling the couches and walls of their valuable furs. He instantly took a hand in the looting. Soon each had all he could handle. They carried their burdens from the lodge, and, with Tom as a rear-guard, marched back toward the *Pelican.* They had rounded the bend of the river, and the two seamen were hurrying to meet them, when old Tom Bent suddenly uttered an indignant whoop and leaped into the air. His musket flew from his shoulder and clattered against

a stone. Kingswell and Ouenwa threw down their bundles and sprang to where he lay, kicking and spluttering. The feathered shaft of an arrow clung to the middle of his left thigh. He was swearing wildly, and vowing vengeance on the "heathen varment" who had pinked him.

Harding and Clotworthy fired into the shadows of the wooded hillside, and Kingswell hoisted the struggling boatswain to his shoulders and continued his advance on the boat. The old sailor begged and implored his commander to put him down, assuring him that he was more surprised than hurt. But Kingswell turned a deaf ear to his entreaties, and did not release him until they were safe beside the *Pelican's* bows. Just then Ouenwa and the sailors came running up with the looted pelts. All were puzzled. Why had the hidden enemy fired only one arrow, when they might have annihilated the little party with a volley?

That night the *Pelican* lay at anchor in the mouth of the river. Twice, during the long, eerie hours between dark and dawn, the man on duty woke his companions; but on both occasions the alarms proved to be false — the splashing of a marauding otter near the shore or the flop of a feeding trout. Under the pale lights of the morning the valley and the stream lay as peaceful and deserted as on the

preceding evening. The voyagers ate their breakfast aboard. Then, as soon as the sun had cleared the light mist from the water, they got up their anchor and rowed up-stream. Harding and Clotworthy pulled on the oars. Bent and the commander crouched in the bows, with ready muskets, and Ouenwa sat at the tiller. The current was strong, and the boat crawled slowly against the twirling sinews of water. Little patches of spindrift, from some fall or rapid farther up the river, floated past them. The pebbly bottom flashed beneath the amber tide. Leaping fish gleamed and splashed on either hand, and sent silver circles rippling to the toiling boat. A moist, sweet fragrance of foliage and mould and dew filled the air.

Soon the deserted lodges came into view, standing smokeless and pathetic between the murmuring river and the brooding trees. Kingswell motioned to Ouenwa to head for the low bank in front of the wigwams. They landed without incident, and all walked toward the village, with their firearms ready and their matches lighted. They explored every lodge and even beat the underbrush. The dwellings had been cleared of pelts and weapons and cooking utensils evidently during the night. A village of this size must have possessed at least

six canoes; but not a canoe, nor so much as a paddle, could they find.

"All run in canoe," remarked Ouenwa, pointing up-stream.

"What be this?" asked Tom Bent, limping toward Kingswell with an arrow and a small square of birch bark in his hand. He had found the bark, pinned by the arrow, to the side of one of the wigwams. Kingswell examined it intently, and shook his head.

"Pictures," he said. "I suppose it is a letter of some kind, in which their wise man tells us what he thinks of us."

Ouenwa took the bark and surveyed the roughly sketched figures, with which it was covered, with a scornful twist of his face.

"Wolf," he said, indicating the central figure. "See! Very big! Bear" — he touched another point of the missive and then tapped his own breast — "see bear! Him no big! Wolf eat bear." He laughed shrilly, and shook his head. "No, no," he said. "No, no."

"What be mun jabberin' about?" muttered Tom Bent.

Kingswell explained that the bear stood for Ouenwa's family, and that the wolf was the symbol of the people who had killed his grandfather.

The *Pelican* continued her voyage before noon, and all day skirted an austere and broken coast. She crossed the mouths of many wide bays, steering for the purple headlands beyond. She rounded many islands and braved intricate channels. Toward evening she rounded a bluffer, grimmer cape than any of the day's experience, and Kingswell, who had just relieved Harding at the tiller, forsook the straight course and headed up the bay. Two hours of brisk sailing brought them to a sheltered roadstead behind an island and just off a wooded cove. They lowered the sail and rowed in close to the beach. They built no fire, and spent the night close to the tide, with their muskets and cutlasses beside them, and the watch changed every two hours.

Three days later the voyagers happened upon a ship. They ran close in to where she lay at anchor, believing her to be English, and did not discover their mistake until the little tub of a brig opened fire from a brass cannonade. The first shot went wide, and the *Pelican* lay off with a straining sail. The second shot fell short, and that ended the encounter, for the Frenchmen were too busy fishing to get up anchor and give chase.

Old Tom Bent was quite cast down over the incident. "It be the first time," he said, "that I

ever seen a Frencher admiral o' a bay in Newfoundland. One year I were fishin' in the *Maid o' Bristol,* in Dog's Harbour, Conception, an', though we was last to drop anchor, an' the only English ship agin six Frenchers and two Spanishers, by Gad, our skipper said he were admiral — an', by Gad, so he were."

But the valorous old mariner did not suggest that they put about and dispute the admiralty of the little harbour which they had just passed.

CHAPTER IX.

AN UNCHARTERED PLANTATION

In a cave in White Bay the voyagers traded with a party of friendly natives. Farther north they found indications of copper, and collected a bagful of the mother rock. In late August a sickness prostrated Master Kingswell and Clotworthy, and camp was made on the mainland. For three weeks the sufferers were unable to lift their heads. They lost flesh until they were little more than skin and bone. Ouenwa undertook the dual position of physician and nurse. He had some knowledge of the science of medicine, as practised by the Beothics, and treated the malady with teas of roots and herbs. He also managed to kill a young caribou, and fed his patients with broth made from the meat. But it was close upon the end of September when the *Pelican* again took up her northward journey.

Kingswell's real reason for this adventurous cruise was the quest of gold. Other explorers had seen gold ore in the possession of the natives, and

he had heard stories of a French sailor having been wounded by a gold-barbed arrow. But the precious metal eluded him. Upon gaining the farthest cape of the great island, he wanted to cross the straits and continue his search along the Labrador coast; but the men shook their heads. The boat was too small for the voyage. Their provisions were running low. The northern summer was already far spent. So Kingswell headed the *Pelican* southward. After a week of fair winds, they were caught in a squall, and the starboard bow of their stout little craft was shattered while they were in the act of winning to a sheltered anchorage. Everything was salvaged; but it took them three days to patch the boat back to a seaworthiness. Even after this unlooked-for delay, the young commander persisted in exploring every likely looking cave and river mouth that had been neglected on the northward trip. The men grumbled sometimes, but it was not in the heart of any sailor to deny the wishes of so charming and brave a gentleman as Master Kingswell. Ouenwa's long conversations in his partially acquired English helped to keep the company in good spirits.

It was November, and nipping weather in that northern bay, when the *Pelican* threaded the islands of Exploits and opened Wigwam Harbour to the

eager gaze of her company. The harbour was empty! They had not sighted a vessel in any of the outer reaches of the bay. The drying-stages and fish stores stood deserted above the green tide.

Kingswell turned a bloodless face toward his men. "They have sailed for home without us," he said, and swallowed hard. Old Tom Bent gazed reflectively about him, and scratched a hoary whisker with a mahogany finger. He had grumbled at the chance of this very disaster, but now that he was face to face with it the thought of grumbling did not occur to him.

"Ay, sir," said he, "the damned rascals has sailed without us — an' we are lucky not to be in such dirty company!"

He spat contemptuously over the gunwale. The colour returned to Kingswell's cheeks, and a flash of the old humour to his eyes. He smiled approvingly on the boatswain. But young Peter Harding, being neither as old nor as wise as Bent, nor as cool-headed as Clotworthy, had something to say on the subject. He ripped out an oath. Then — "By God," he cried, "here's one man who'd rather sail in a ship with what ye calls dirty company, Tom Bent, than starve in a damn skiff with — with you all," he finished, lamely.

Kingswell and Ouenwa looked at the young sea-

man with mute indignation in their eyes. But Tom Bent laughed softly.

"Ay, Peter, boy," he said, "ye be one o' these fine, lion-hearted English mariners what's the pride o' the king an' the terror o' the seas. The likes o' ye don't sail shipmates with men, but with the duff an' the soup an' the prize-money." His voice shrilled a little. "Ay, if it wasn't that I know ye for a better man than ye sound just now, I'd ax cap'n's leave to twist the snivellin' nose off the fat face o' ye."

"Tom be right," remarked Clotworthy, with a knowing and well-considered wag of his heavy head.

Harding, who had delivered his speech from a commanding position on a thwart, sat down very softly, as if anxious not to attract any further attention.

"We'll have a look at the old arrow-maker, lads," said Kingswell, cheerfully, "and stock up with enough dried venison to carry us south to Trinity, or even to Conception. Ships often lie in those bays till the snow flies. At the worst we can sail the old *Pelican* right 'round to St. John's, and winter there. I'll wager the governor would be glad enough of a few extra fighting men to scare off the French and the privateers."

Despite Master Kingswell's brave words, there was no store of dried venison to be obtained from the arrow-maker, for both the old philosopher's lodge and Black Feather's were gone—gone utterly, and only the round, level circles on the sward to show where they had stood. What had become of Montaw and his friends could only be surmised. Ouenwa's opinion that the enemies of Soft Hand were responsible for their disappearance was shared by the Englishman. All agreed that immediate flight was safer than a further investigation of the mystery. So the storm-beaten, wave-weary *Pelican* turned seaward again.

Two days later, toward nightfall, and after having sailed far up an arm of the sea and into the mouth of a great river, in fruitless search of some belated fishing-ship, the adventurers were startled and cheered by the sound of a musket-shot. It came from inland, from up the shadowy river. It was muffled by distance. It clapped dully on their eager ears like the slamming of a wooden door. But every lonely heart of them knew it for the voice of the black powder. They drifted back a little and lay at anchor all night, just off the mouth of the river. With the dark came the cruel frost. But they crawled beneath their freight of furs and slept. They were astir with the first gray lights,

and before sunrise were pulling cautiously up the middle of the channel. White frost sparkled on thwart and gunwale. Dark, mist-wrapped forests of spruce and fir and red pine came down to the water on both sides. Here and there a fang of black rock, noisy with roosting gulls, jutted above the dark current. A jay screamed in the woods. A belated snipe skimmed across their bows. An eagle eyed them from the crown of an ancient pine, and swooped down and away.

They must have ascended the stream a matter of two miles — and hard pulling it was — when Ouenwa's sharp eyes detected the haze of wood smoke beyond a wooded bend.

"Cooking-fire there!" he exclaimed. "Maybe get something to eat? Maybe get killed?"

He spoke cheerfully, as if neither prospect was devoid of charm.

"We'll risk it," remarked Kingswell, quietly. "Put your weight into the stroke, lads — and, Tom, keep your match handy."

At last the bend was rounded, and the rowers turned on the thwarts and peered over their shoulders, and Kingswell uttered a low cry of delight. Close ahead of them the right-hand bank lay level and open, and along its edge were beached three skiffs. About twenty yards back stood a little settle-

ment of log cabins enclosed by palisades. From the chimneys of the cabins plumes of comfortable smoke rose to the clearer azure above. In front of this civilized spot, in mid-stream, a small high-pooped vessel lay moored. Her masts and spars were gone. She swung like a dead body in the brown current.

Tom Bent swore softly and with grave deliberation. "Damn my eyes," he murmured. "Ay, sir, dash my old figger-head, if there don't lay a reggler, complete plantation! Blast my eyes!"

"A tidy, Christian appearin' place," remarked Clotworthy, joyously. "An' real chimleys, too! Well, that do look homely, for certain."

At that moment three men, armed with muskets, ran from the gateway of the enclosure and stood uncertain half-way between the palisade and the river. Kingswell hailed them, standing in the bluff bows of the little *Pelican*. He stated the nationality, the names, and degrees of himself and the other of the little company, and the manner of their misfortune, even while the boat was covering the short distance to the shore.

The settlers laid aside their weapons, and received Master Kingswell and his men with every show of cordiality and good faith. They were strapping fellows, with weather-tanned faces, broad foreheads, steady eyes, and herculean shoulders.

They doffed their skin caps to the gentleman adventurer.

"Ye be our first visitors, sir, since we come ashore here two year and two months ago come to-morrow," said one of the three. "Yes, it be just two year and two months ago, come to-morrow, that we dropped anchor off the mouth of this river," he added, turning to his companions. They agreed silently. Their eyes and attention were fully absorbed by Master Kingswell's imposing, though sadly stained, yellow boots and gold-laced coat. Another settler joined the group, and welcomed the voyagers with sheepish grins. A fifth, arrayed in finery and a sword, approached and halted near by.

"These," said the spokesman, "be Donnellys — father and son." With a casual tip of the thumb, he indicated two rugged members of the company. He turned to a handsome young giant beside him and smote him affectionately on the shoulder. "This here be my boy John — John Trigget," he said, "an' that gentleman be Captain Pierre d'Antons." He bowed, with ungracious deference, to the dark, lean, fashionably dressed individual who stood a few paces away. "An' my name be William Trigget, master mariner," he concluded.

Kingswell bowed low for the second time, and

again shook hands with the elder Trigget. Then he stepped over to D'Antons and murmured a few courteous words in so low a voice that his men caught nothing of them. Each gentleman laid his left hand lightly on the hilt of his sword. Each bowed, laced hat in hand, until his long hair fell forward about his face. D'Antons' locks were raven-black, and straight as a horse's mane. Young Kingswell's were bright as pale gold, and soft as a woman's. Both were of goodly proportions and gallant bearing, though the Frenchman was the taller and thinner of the two.

D'Antons slipped his arm within Kingswell's, and, motioning to the others to follow, started toward the stockade. William Trigget immediately strode forward and walked on Master Kingswell's other hand, as if determined to assert his rights as a leader of the mixed company. Ouenwa and the seamen of the *Pelican,* and the Donnellys and young Trigget, followed close on the heels of their superiors.

"And who may ye be, lad?" inquired John Trigget of Ouenwa, as they crossed the level of frost-seared grass.

"I am Ouenwa," replied the boy, frankly, "and Master Kingswell is my strong friend and protector. My grandsire was Soft Hand, the head

chief of this country. His enemies — barking foxes who name themselves wolves — pulled him down in the night-time."

The big settler nodded, and the others uttered ejaculations of pity and interest. The story was not news to them, however.

"Ay," said John Trigget, "Soft Hand were pulled down in the night, sure enough. The Injuns run fair crazy, what with murderin' each other an' burnin' each other's camps. I was huntin', two days to the north, when the trouble began. I come home without stoppin' to make any objections, an' the skipper kep' our gates shut for a whole week. They rebels was for wipin' out everybody; an' they captured two French ships, an' did for the crews. They be moved away inlan' now, thank God. We be safe till spring, I'm thinkin'."

"There be worse folks nor they tormentin' Injuns around these here soundin's, an' ye can take my word for that," growled the elder Donnelly, in guarded tones.

"Belay that," whispered John Trigget. "The devil can cook his stew plenty quick enough. Us won't bear a hand till the pot boils over."

Captain d'Antons glanced back at the talkers. His black eyes gleamed suspiciously.

CHAPTER X.

GENTRY AT FORT BEATRIX

INSIDE the stockade, posted unevenly around three sides of a foot-worn square, were five buildings of rough logs. From a platform in the southeast corner two small cannon presented their muzzles to the river. At the back of this platform, on the southern side of the square, stood the Donnelly cabin. It was stoutly built, and measured fifteen paces across the front. Against the western palisade the Trigget cabin and Captain d'Antons' habitation faced the square. On the north side stood a fourth dwelling and a small storehouse. In the centre of the yard bubbled a spring of clear water under a rustic shed. A tiny brook sparkled away from it, under the stockade and down to the river. The well was flanked on both sides by a couple of slim birches, now leafless under the white November sun.

The visitors were led to the Triggets' cabin, and Skipper Trigget's wife and daughter — both big,

comely women — fed them with the best in the little plantation. After breakfast, Kingswell and Ouenwa were taken to D'Antons' quarters. The Frenchman was the spirit of hospitality, and took blankets and sheets from his own bed to dress their couches. Also he produced a flask of priceless brandy, from which he and Kingswell pledged a couple of glasses to the Goddess of Chance. The toast was D'Antons' suggestion.

Presently D'Antons excused himself, saying that he had a matter of business to attend to, and left his guests to their own devices. The house was divided into two apartments by curtains of caribou hides, which were hung from one of the low cross-beams of the ceiling. At the end of each room a fire burned on a roughly built hearth. Two small windows of clouded glass partially lit the sombre interior. Books in English, French, and Spanish, a packet of papers, ink and quills, and a neatly executed drawing of a pinnace under sail lay on a table near one of the windows. Antlers of stags, decorated quivers and bows, painted hides, and glossy skins adorned the rough walls. Above the hearth in the room in which Kingswell and his young companion sat, hung a musket with a silver inlaid stock, a carved powder-horn, and several knives and daggers in beaded sheaths. On

the floor lay two great, pink-lipped West Indian shells. A steel head-piece, a breastplate of the same sure metal, and a heavy sword with a basket hilt hung above D'Antons' bed.

Kingswell looked over the books on the table. He found that one of them was a manual of arms, written in the Spanish language; another a work of navigation, by a Frenchman; a third a weighty thesis on the science and practice of surgery; and the fourth was a volume as well-loved as familiar, — Master William Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet." He took up this last, and, seating himself with his shoulder to the window, was soon far away from the failures and daily perils of the wilderness. The greedy, hard-bitted materialist Present, with its quests of "fish," and fur, and gold, was replaced by the magic All-Time of the playwright poet.

Ouenwa wandered about the room, prying into every nook and corner, and examining the shells, the arms, and the decorations. He even knelt on the hearthstone, and, at the risk of setting fire to his hair, tried to solve the mystery of the chimney — for a fire indoor unaccompanied by a lodgeful of smoke was a new thing in his experience. He looked frequently at Kingswell, in the hope of finding him open to questions, but was always dis-

appointed. At last the thought occurred to him that it would be a fine thing to get hold of the great sword above the bed, and make cut, lunge, and parry with it as Kingswell had shown him how to do on several occasions. So he climbed on to the bed, and, in trying to clear the sword from its peg, knocked the steel cap ringing to the floor. Kingswell sprang from his stool, with his arm across his body and his hand on his sword-hilt, and Master Shakespeare's immortal drama sprawled at his feet. "Oh, that's all, is it?" he exclaimed, in tones of relief. "But you must not handle other people's goods, lad," he added, kindly, "especially a gentleman's arms and armour."

Ouenwa flushed and apologized, and was about to step from D'Antons' couch to recover the head-piece, when D'Antons himself entered the cabin. Kingswell turned to him and explained the accident.

"My young friend is very sorry," he said, "and would beg your pardon if he felt less embarrassed. However, captain, I beg it for him. I was so intent on the affairs of Romeo that I was not watching him. He is naturally of an investigating turn of mind."

The Frenchman waved a slim hand and flashed his white teeth. "It is nothing, nothing," he cried.

"I beg you not to mention it again, or give it another thought. The old pot has sustained many a shrewder whack than a tumble on the floor. Ah, it has turned blades of Damascus before now! But enough of this triviality! I have returned to request you to come with me to our governor. Neither Trigget nor I have mentioned him to you, as he is not desirous of meeting strangers. But he will make his own apologies, Master Kingswell."

He stood aside, for Kingswell and Ouenwa to pass out before him. Kingswell went first. As Ouenwa crossed the threshold, D'Antons nipped him sharply by the arm, and hissed, "Dog! Cur!" in a voice so low, so sinister, that the boy gasped. But in a breath the Frenchman was his affable self again, and the Beothic, with the invectives still burning his ears, almost believed that he had been the victim of some evil magic. Kingswell caught nothing of the incident.

Ouenwa was requested to wait outside. Master Kingswell was ushered into the governor's cabin, and D'Antons closed the door behind him. The young Englishman found himself in a dimly lit apartment very similar to that which he had just left. He hesitated, a step inside the threshold, and narrowed his lids in an effort to see more clearly. The Frenchman paused at his elbow. Two figures

advanced from the farther side of the room. He ventured another step, and bowed with all the grace at his command, for one of the figures was that of a young woman in flashing raiment. The other was of a slim, foppishly dressed man of a little past middle age, with a worn face that somehow retained its air of youthfulness despite its haggard lines and faded skin.

"Welcome to our humble retreat, Master Kingswell," said the gentleman, extending his hand and laughing softly. "This is indeed an unlooked-for pleasure. We last met, I believe, at Randon Hall — or was it at Beverly?"

"Sir Ralph Westleigh!" exclaimed Kingswell, in a voice of ill-concealed consternation and surprise. For a moment he stood in an attitude of half-recoil. For a moment he hesitated, staring at the other with wide eyes. Then he caught the waiting hand in a firm grip.

"Thank you, Sir Ralph. Yes, it was at Beverly that we last met," he said, evenly. He turned to the girl, who stood beside her father with downcast eyes and flaming cheeks and throat. The baronet hastened to make her known to the visitor.

"My daughter Beatrix," he said. "A good girl, who willingly and cheerfully shares her worthless father's exile."

Mistress Westleigh extended a firm and shapely hand, and Kingswell, bending low above it, intoxicated by the sudden presence of beauty and a flood of homesick memories, pressed his lips to the slim fingers with a warmth that startled the lady and brought a flash of anger to D'Antons' eyes. He recovered himself in an instant. "To see you in this wilderness — amid these bleak surroundings!" he exclaimed, scarcely above a whisper. "I cannot realize it, Mistress Beatrix! And once we played at racquets together in the court at Beverly."

The girl smiled at him, with a gleam of understanding in her dark, parti-coloured eyes.

"I remember," she said. "You have not changed greatly, save in size." And at that she laughed, with a note of embarrassment.

"But you have," replied Kingswell. "You were not very beautiful as a little girl. To me you looked much the same as my own sisters."

For a second, or less, the maiden's eyes met his with merriment and questioning in their depths. Then they were lowered. Sir Ralph moved uneasily.

"Come, come," he said, "we must not stand here all day, like geese on a village green. There are seats by the fire." He led the way. "Captain, if you are not busy I hope you'll stay and hear some

of Master Kingswell's adventures," he added, turning to D'Antons.

"With pleasure," answered the captain.

"One moment, sir," said Kingswell to Sir Ralph Westleigh. "I have a young friend — a sort of ward — whom I left outside. I'll tell him to run over to the men and amuse himself with them."

As he opened the door and spoke a few kind words to Ouenwa, there was a sneer on D'Antons' lips that did not escape Mistress Beatrix Westleigh. It irritated her beyond measure, and she had all she could do to restrain herself from slapping him — for hot blood and a fighting spirit dwelt in that fair body. She wondered how she had once considered him attractive. She blushed crimson at the thought.

Kingswell returned and seated himself on a stool between the governor of the little colony and the maiden. First of all, he told them who Ouenwa was, and of the time the lad saved him from injury by flooring old Trowley with his canoe paddle. Then he briefly sketched the voyage of the *Pelican,* and told something of his interests in the fishing fleet and in the new land.

"And you found no indications of gold?" queried D'Antons.

"None," replied the voyager, "but some splen-

did copper ore in great quantities, and one mine of 'fool's gold.'"

The baronet nodded, with one of his wan smiles. "There are other kinds of fool's gold than these iron pyrites, I believe," he said, "and one finds it nearer home than in this God-forsaken — ah — in this wild country."

The others understood the reference, and even the polished Frenchman looked into the fire and had nothing to say. Kingswell studied the water-bleached toes of his boots, and Beatrix glanced piteously at her father. For Sir Ralph Westleigh's life had known much of fool's gold, and much of many another folly, and something of that to which his acquaintances in Somerset — and, for that matter, in all England — gave a stronger and less lenient name. The baronet had lived hard; but his story comes later.

"I knew nothing of this plantation of yours," said Kingswell, presently. "I did not know, even, that you were interested in colonization — and yet you have been here a matter of two years, so Trigget tells me."

"Yes, and likely to die here — unless I am unearthed," replied Sir Ralph, bitterly, and with a meaning glance at Kingswell. "I put entire faith in my friends," he added. "And they are all in

this little fort on Gray Goose River. My undoing lies in their hands."

"Sir Ralph," replied Kingswell, uneasily but stoutly, "I hope your trust has been extended to me, — yes, and to my men. Your wishes in any matter of — of silence or the like — are our orders. My fellows are true as steel. My friends are theirs. The young Beothic would risk his life for you at a word from me."

The baronet was visibly affected by this speech. He laid a hand on the young man's knee and peered into his face.

"Then you are a friend — out and out?" he inquired.

"To the death," said the other, huskily.

"And you have heard? Of course you have heard!"

"Yes."

"It is not for me to say 'God bless you' to any man," said Sir Ralph, "but it's good of you. I feel your kindness more deeply than I can say. I have forgotten my old trick of making pretty speeches."

Kingswell blushed uncomfortably and wished that D'Antons, with his polite, superior, inscrutable smile, was a thousand miles out of sight of his embarrassment. The girl leaned toward him. But

she did not look at him. "God bless you — my fellow countryman," she whispered, in a voice so low that he alone caught the words. He had no answer to make to that unexpected reward. For a little they maintained a painful silence. It was broken by the Frenchman.

"You understand, Master Kingswell, that, for certain reasons, it is advisable that the place of Sir Ralph Westleigh's retreat be kept from the knowledge of every one save ourselves," he said, slowly and easily.

"I understand," replied Kingswell, shortly. Captain d'Antons jarred on him, despite all his faultless and affable manners.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SETTING-IN OF WINTER

About mid-afternoon of the day of Kingswell's advent into the settlement on Gray Goose River — Fort Beatrix it was called — the sky clouded, the voice of the river thinned and saddened, and snow began to fall. By Trigget's advice — and Trigget seemed to be the working head of the plantation — the pelts and gear of the *Pelican* were removed to the storehouse.

"Ye must winter in Newfoundland, sir, however the idea affects your plans, for no more ships will be sailing home this season; and ye couldn't make it in your bully," said the hospitable skipper.

"We might work 'round to St. John's," replied Kingswell.

Trigget shook his head. "This be the safer place o' the two," he answered, "and your Honour's company here will help keep Sir Ralph out o' his black moods. He wants ye to stay, I know. There'll be work and to spare for your men, what

with cuttin' fuel, and huntin' game, and boat-buildin'."

So Kingswell decided that, if this should prove the real setting-in of winter, and if no objections were raised by any of the pioneers, he would share the colony's fortunes until the following spring. D'Antons expressed himself as charmed with the decision; but, for all that, Kingswell saw, by deeper and finer signs than most people would credit him with the ability to read, that his presence was really far from agreeable to the French adventurer.

When night closed about the little settlement, the snow was still falling, and ground and roofs shone with bleak radiance through the veil of darkness. The flakes of the storm were small and dry, and unstirred by any wind. They wove a curtain of silence over the unprotesting wilderness.

Kingswell and Ouenwa supped with the Westleighs. But before the meal, and before Mistress Beatrix appeared from her little chamber, the two gentlemen had an hour of private conversation.

"This Captain d'Antons — what of him?" inquired Kingswell.

"He is none of our choosing," replied the baronet. "Several years ago, before I had quite given up the old life and the old show, I met him in London. He was reported rich. He had sailed

many voyages to the West Indies, and talked of lands granted to him in New France. I had sold Beverly, and Beatrix was with me in town. She was little more than a child, but her looks attracted a deal of attention. She had nothing else, as all the town knew, with her father a ruined gamester, and her dead mother's property gone, with Randon Hall and Beverly! Dear God, but here was a dower for a beautiful lass! Well, the poets made a song or two, and three old men were for paying titles and places for her little hand — and then the end came. We won back to Somerset, spur and whip, lashed along by fear. We hid about, in this cottage and that, while my trusted friend Trigget provisioned his little craft and got together all the folk whom you see here, save D'Antons. After a rough and tiring voyage of three weeks' duration, and just when we were looking out for land, we were met by a French frigate, and forced to haul our wind. A boat-load of armed men left the pirate — yes, that's what she was, a damn pirate — and there was Captain d'Antons seated in the stern-sheets of her, beside the mate. He had not been as long at sea as we had, and he knew all about my trouble, curse him! He left the frigate, which he said was bound on a peaceful voyage of discovery to the West Indies, and joined our ex-

pedition. I could not forbid it. I was at his mercy, with his cutthroats alongside and the gallows at the back of it. He has hung to us ever since; and he has acted civil enough, damn him. If he'd show his hoof now and again, I'd like it better — for then we would all be on our guard."

"But why does he stay? Why does he live in this place when he might be reaping the harvests common to such husbandmen?" inquired Kingswell. "Has he a stake in the colony?"

The baronet gazed reflectively at the young man. "The fellow has kept my secret, and shared our rough lot and dreary exile, and even expended some money on provisions," he replied, deliberately, "for no other reason than that he is in love with my daughter."

"He! A buccaneer!" exclaimed Kingswell, warmly.

"Even so," answered the baronet. "There, on the high seas, when he had us all in his clutch, when he might have seized by force that for which he now sues, he accepted my word of honour — mark you, he accepted what I had scarce the face to offer — that I would not withstand his suit, nor allow my men to do him any treasonable hurt so long as he kept my hiding-place secret and behaved like a gentleman."

"And Mistress Beatrix?" asked the young man, softly.

"Ah, who can say?" responded the broken baronet. "At one time I feared that he was appearing as a hero to her. But I do not know. He played his game cleverly at first, but now he is losing patience. I would to God that he would lose it altogether. Then the compact would be broken. But no, he is cautious. He knows that, at a word from the girl, my sword would be out. Then things would go hard with him, even though he should kill me, for my men hate him."

"Why not pick a quarrel with him?" asked the headstrong Kingswell.

"You do not understand — you cannot understand — how delicate a thing to keep is the word of honour of a man who is branded as being without honour," replied the other, sadly.

"And should Mistress Beatrix flout him," said Kingswell, "he would find his revenge in reporting your whereabouts to the garrison at St. John's."

"He is well watched," said Sir Ralph, "and this is not an easy place to escape from, even in summer. We are hidden, up here, and not so much as a fishing-ship has sighted us in the two years."

"I'll wager that he'd find a way past your vigilance if he set his mind to it," retorted Kingswell.

"Gad, but it maddens me to think of being billeted under the roof of such an aspiring rogue! Rip me, but it's a monstrous sin that a lady should be plagued, and a whole body of Englishmen menaced, by a buccaneering adventurer."

"My boy," replied Sir Ralph, wearily, "you must curb your indignation, even as the rest of us do. Discretion is the card to play just now. I have been holding the game with it for over two years. Who knows but that Time may shuffle the pack before long?"

Just then Mistress Beatrix joined them. She wore one of the gay gowns — in truth somewhat enlarged and remodelled — by which her girlish beauty had been abetted and set off in England. There seemed a brightness and shimmer all about her. The coils of her dark hair were bright. The changing eyes were bright. The lips, the round neck and dainty throat, the buckled shoes, and even the material of bodice and skirt were radiant in the gloom and firelight of that rough chamber. To all appearances, her mood was as bright as her beauty. Sir Ralph watched her with adoring eyes, realizing her bravery. Kingswell joined in her gay chatter, and found it easy to be merry. Ouenwa, silent on the corner of the bench by the hearth,

gazed at this vision of loveliness with wide eyes. He could realize, without effort, that Sir Ralph and D'Antons and even his glorious Kingswell were men, even as Tom Bent, and the Triggets, and Black Feather were, but that Mistress Beatrix was a woman — a woman, as were William Trigget's wife and daughter, and Black Feather's squaw — no, he could not believe it! He was even surprised to note a resemblance to other females in the number of her hands and feet. She had, most assuredly, two hands and two feet. Also she had one head. But how different in quality, though similar in number, were the members of this flashing young divinity.

"I left Montaw's lodge to behold the wonders of the world," mused the dazzled child of the wilderness, "and already, without crossing the great salt water, I have found the surpassing wonder. Can it be that any more such beings exist? Has even Master Kingswell ever before looked upon such beauty and such raiment?"

His spellbound gaze was met by the eyes of the enchantress. To his amazement, the lady moved from her father's side and seated herself on the bench.

"You are so quiet," she said, "that I did not

notice you before. So you are Master Kingswell's ward?"

Her voice was very kind and cheerful, and her silks brushed the lad's hand. He looked at the finery uneasily, but did not answer her question.

"You told us he knew English," she said to Kingswell.

"He does," replied the young man. Then, to the boy: "Ouenwa, Mistress Westleigh wants to know if you are my friend."

"Yes," said the lad. "Good friend."

"And my friend, too?" asked the girl.

"Yes," replied Ouenwa. "You look so — so — like he called the sky one morning." He pointed at Master Kingswell.

"What was that?" she queried.

"What morning?" asked Kingswell, leaning forward and smiling.

"Five mornings ago, chief," replied Ouenwa.

Kingswell laughed. "You are right, lad," he said.

"But tell me what you called the sky, sir. Really, this is very provoking. No doubt the boy thinks I look a fright," said Miss Westleigh.

"Beatrix," interrupted Sir Ralph, "surely I see Kate with the candles."

The girl could not deny it, for the table was

spread in the same room, — a rough, square table with a damask cloth, and laid out with a fair show of silver, decanters, and a great venison pasty, which had been cooked in the Triggets' kitchen across the yard.

The meal was a delightful one to Kingswell. He had not eaten off china dishes for many months. The food, though plain, was well cooked and well served. The wines were as nectar to his eager palate. And over it all was the magic of Mistress Westleigh's presence — potent magic enough to a young gentleman who had almost forgotten the looks and ways of the women of his own kind. Ouenwa sat as one in a dream, fairly stupefied by the gleam of silver and linen under the soft light of the candles. He ate painfully and slowly, imitating Kingswell. He looked often at the vivacious hostess. Suddenly he exclaimed: "I remember. Yes, it was lovely beautiful, what the chief said!" Kingswell laughed delightedly, and the baronet joined, with reserve, in the mirth. The girl looked puzzled for a moment, — then confused, — then, with a little, indescribable cry of merriment, she patted Ouenwa's shoulder.

"Charming lad!" she exclaimed. "I have not received so pretty a compliment for, oh, ever so long."

She looked across the table at Kingswell, feeling his gaze upon her. His eyes were very grave, and darkened with thought, though his lips were still smiling.

CHAPTER XII.

MEDITATION AND ACTION

For hours after retiring Kingswell lay awake, reviewing, in his restless brain, the incidents of that crowded day. His couch was luxurious, compared to the resting-places he had known since leaving the *Heart of the West;* but, for all that, sleep evaded him. From the other side of the hearth Ouenwa's deep and regular breathing reached his alert ears. He saw the yellow light blink to darkness above the curtain of skins, when D'Antons extinguished his candle in the other apartment. The red firelight rose and fell, dwindled and flooded high. The core of it contracted and expanded, and a straight log across the middle of the glow was like a heavy eyelid. It was like something alive — like something stirring between sleeping and waking, desiring sleep, yet afraid to forsake a vigil. To the restless explorer beside the hearth it suggested a drowsy servitor nodding and starting in a deserted hall. "What is it waiting

for?" he wondered, and smiled at the conceit. "What does it fear? Mayhap the master and mistress are late at a rout, and are people without consideration for the feelings of their servants."

From such harmless imagery his mind slipped to the less pleasant subject of Sir Ralph Westleigh. He recalled what he had seen and heard of the days of the baronet's glory — of the great places near Bristol, with their stables that were the envy of dukes, and their routs that lured people weary and dangerous journeys — of the famous Lady Westleigh and her jewels — of Sir Ralph's kindliness to great and small alike. His own father, the merchant-knight of Bristol, had held the baronet in high esteem. Bernard himself, when a child, and later when a well-grown lad, had experienced the hospitality of Randon Hall and Beverly. At the time of his last visit to Beverly, rumour was busy with the baronet's affairs. During Lady Westleigh's life, all had gone well, apparently. After her death, Sir Ralph spent less of his time at home, and more of it in distant London, and even in Paris. Stories went abroad of his heavy gaming and his ruinous bad luck. People said the love of the dice and the cards had settled in the man like a disease, working on him physically to such an extent that he looked a different person when the heat of the

play was on him. Also it played the devil with him morally — and perhaps mentally. So things took the turn and started down-hill. Then the run was short and mad, despite warnings of friends, threats of relatives, and the baronet's own numerous clever checks and parries to avoid disaster. There was a season of hope after the sale of Randon. But the lurid clouds gathered again. Then Beverly was impoverished to the last oak and the last horse in the stud. The baronet took his daughter to town, and, by a turn of luck, put in a few merry months. Then a certain Scotch viscount caught him playing as no gentleman, no matter how dissolute, is supposed to play. The Scotchman made a clamour, and was killed for his trouble. That was the last known of Sir Ralph Westleigh and his daughter by any one of the outside world until the *Pelican* landed her voyagers before the stockade of Fort Beatrix on Gray Goose River.

All these matters employed Kingswell's thoughts as he lay awake in Captain d'Antons' cabin and watched the fire on the rough hearth fall lower and lower. Pity for the young girl, who had been born and bred to such a different heritage, pained and fretted him more keenly than a personal loss. The discomfort of it was almost as if his conscience were accusing him of disloyalty to a friend, though

that was absurd, as neither he nor his had helped Westleigh in his descent, nor cried out against him when he met disaster at the bottom. But he had never, during those two years after their disappearance, given them more than a passing thought — and they had been friends and neighbours. He had experienced no pity for the young and beautiful girl with whom he had played in the racquet court at Beverly. Like the great world of which he was so insignificant a part, he had forgotten. Two lives, more or less, were of no consequence in such stirring times. He groaned, as if the realization of a great sin had come to him. Then, to the anger against himself was added anger against the world that had dragged Sir Ralph into this oblivion of dishonour, and the innocent girl into exile. What had she done to be driven beyond the bounds of civilization, her safety dependent on the whims of a French buccaneer? Ah, there was the raw spot, sure enough! In the little space of time between two risings of the sun, Kingswell had met a man and marked him for an enemy. Nursing a bitter, though somewhat muddled, resentment, he at last fell asleep, guarded from storm and frost by the roof of the very man who had inspired his anger.

For the next few days matters went smoothly

at Fort Beatrix. It was evident to even the least experienced of the settlers that the winter had come to stay. The snow lay deep and dry over the frozen earth. The river was already hidden under a skin of gleaming ice, made opaque by the snow that had mingled with the water while it was freezing. The little settlement took up the routine of the dreary months. Axes were sharpened at the great stone in the well-house. The men donned moccasins of deerskin. They tied ingenious racquets, or snow-shoes, to their feet and tramped into the sombre forests. All day the thud, thud of the axes jarred across the air, interrupted ever and anon by the rending, splitting lament of some falling tree.

Kingswell put his men under William Trigget's orders, and he and Ouenwa spent much of their time with the choppers. Also, they journeyed with the trappers. Captain d'Antons, who was a skilled and tireless woodsman, led them on many weary marches in quest of game and fur. Most of the caribou had travelled southward, in herds of from ten to one hundred head, at the approach of winter; but a few remained in the sheltered valleys. Fortunately the settlers were familiar with the habits of the deer, and had laid in a supply of dried venison during the summer. However, when-

ever the hunters managed to make a kill, the fresh meat was enthusiastically received at the fort. Hares and grouse were snared, as were foxes and other small animals. A few wolves and one or two wildcats were shot. The bears were all tucked safely away in their winter quarters, and the beavers were frozen into theirs. On the whole, the hunters had a hard time of it, and no great reward for their toil. But it was work that kept both their brains and sinews employed, and so was of a deal more worth than the bare value of the pelts and dinners it supplied.

One day in early December, when Kingswell, D'Antons, the younger Donnelly, and Ouenwa were traversing a drifted expanse of "barren," marching in single file and without undue noise, they came upon another trail of racquet prints. They halted. They regarded this unexpected evidence of the proximity of their fellow man with misgivings — for snow had fallen in abundance, and therefore the trail was new. They glanced uneasily about them, scanning clumps of spruce and fir and mounds of snow-drifted rock with anxious eyes. They strained their ears for some warning sound — or for the twanging of bowstrings. They saw nothing. They heard nothing but the discon-

solate chirping of a moose-bird in a thicket close at hand. D'Antons lowered his gaze to the trail.

"From the westward, and heading for the river," he said. "Then they are not from the village on Gandei Lake."

"Big number," remarked Ouenwa. "Ten, twenty, thirty — don't know how much! Whole camp, I think."

"Ay," agreed Donnelly, "they sure has packed clear down through two falls o' snow. Ye could trot a pony along the pat' they has made."

"Are you on friendly terms with the savages?" inquired Kingswell of Captain d'Antons. The Frenchman smiled uncheerfully and shrugged his lean shoulders. He was not one to speak unconsidered words.

"Yes, we are on friendly terms with the people from Gander Lake," he replied, presently. "That is, we have traded with them a number of times, and have exchanged gifts with their chief, and through him with old Soft Hand. But Soft Hand is dead now; and these fellows are evidently from the West. Also, friendship means nothing where these vermin are concerned. Treachery is as the breath of life to them."

"Panounia," whispered Ouenwa, excitedly. "Panounia no good for friend. He is a mur-

derer. He is a false chief. He make trade — yes, with war-arrows from the bushes and with knives in the dark. In friendship his hand is under his robe, and his fingers are on the hilt of his knife. Evil warms itself at his heart like an old witch at a fire."

D'Antons smiled thinly at the lad. "There is a time for all things," he said — "a time for oratory and another time for action. If you are willing, Master Kingswell, let us now retrace our steps as swiftly and quietly as may be. It would be wise to warn the fort that a band of the sly devils is abroad."

Ouenwa glanced uncertainly at the speaker and flushed darkly. Kingswell intimated his willingness to return immediately to Fort Beatrix by a curt nod. It was in his heart to administer a kick to Captain Pierre d'Antons, though just why the desire he could not say. They turned in their tracks and started back along the twisting, seven-mile trail. D'Antons led; and the pace he set was a stiff one. Mile after mile was passed, with no other sound save those of padding racquet and toiling breath. In the hollows their shoulders brushed the snow from the crowding spruce-fronds. Going over the knolls, they crouched low, and scanned the horizon with alert eyes as they ran.

At last, all but breathless from the prolonged exertion, the hunters turned aside from the path and ascended the gradual, heavily wooded side of a hill which overlooked the fort from the south. They crossed the naked summit with painful caution, bending double, and taking every advantage of the sheltering thickets.

"The choppers are inside," whispered D'Antons to Kingswell, as they peered furtively out between the snow-weighted branches. "See! And the savages are in cover along the river." It was quite evident to Kingswell that the place had been attacked, and was now in a state of siege. The platform in the southeast corner of the stockade was protected by shields composed of bundles of firewood. Men whom he recognized as those who had been working in the woods earlier in the day moved about within the enclosure. The wide, snow-covered clearing that had been so spotless when he had last seen it was trampled and stained here and there by dark patches. Along the fringe of timber that shut the river from the clearing, and extended to within a dozen paces of the southeast corner of the stockade, a Beothic warrior would frequently show himself for a moment, hoot derisively, and let fly a harmless shaft. Presently the watchers on the knoll saw the head and shoulders of William

Trigget above the shield of the gun-platform. The master mariner shaded his eyes with his hand and seemed to be scanning the woods along the river and then the timber in which his own comrades were concealed. He lowered his hand and ducked quickly — and not a second too soon; for a flight of arrows rattled against his stronghold, a few stuck, quivering, into the pickets of the stockade, and many fell within the fort.

Kingswell turned to D'Antons. "More of them than we thought," he said. "There must have been a hundred arrows in that volley."

Captain d'Antons nodded with a preoccupied air. He did not look at his companion, and his brow was puckered in lines of thought. If the Englishman had been able to read the other's mind at that moment, a deal of future trouble would have been spared him. However, as Kingswell was but an adventurous, keen-witted young man, with no superhuman powers, he was content with the Frenchman's nod, and returned his attentions to the fort.

Suddenly, from the screen of faggots above which Trigget had so lately exposed his head, burst a flash of yellow flame, a spurt of white smoke, and a clapping bulk of sound. The stockade shook. A spruce-tree shook in the wood by the river, and cries of fear and consternation rang across the

frosty air. A score of savages darted from their cover and as quickly sped back again. Flight after flight of arrows broke away and tested every inch of surface of Trigget's shelter. Then, with shrill screams and mad yells of defiance, the whole party of Beothics emerged into the clearing and dashed for the palisade. They drew their bows as they ran, and some hurled clubs and spears. In front, with red feathers in his hair and his right arm bandaged across his breast, Panounia shouted encouragement and led the charge. They were halfway across the open when the second cannon spat forth its message of hate. The ball passed low over the advancing mass and plunged into the timber beyond. For a second or two, the attackers wavered, a few turned back, then they continued their valorous onset. They were already springing at the palisade when the muskets crashed in their faces from half a dozen loopholes. This volley was followed immediately by another. The savages dropped back from their futile leapings against the fortification, hung on their heels for a moment, clamorous and undecided, and then broke for cover. They dragged their dead and wounded with them, and left sanguinary trails on the snow. They were within a few yards of the sheltering trees when one

of the little cannon banged again. The ball cut across the mass of crowded warriors like a string through cheese.

"Now is our time!" exclaimed Kingswell. "Run for the gate, lads."

CHAPTER XIII.

SIGNS OF A DIVIDED HOUSE

THE returning hunters were promptly admitted to the fort. The little garrison welcomed them joyfully. The West Country sailors were, for the moment, cordial even toward D'Antons, whom they usually ignored. The party had taken a hundred chances with death in the crossing of the narrow clearing. Arrows had followed them from the fringe of wood along the river, like bees from an overturned hive. Ouenwa's left arm had been scratched. D'Antons' fur cap had been torn from his head, pierced through and through. A hail of missiles had clattered against the gate as the good timbers swung to behind them. Cries of rage and chagrin, in which Ouenwa's name was repeated many times, rang from the retreat of the defeated warriors. The garrison answered with cheers. Ouenwa's shrill voice carried clear above the tumult, lifted in Beothic insults.

Sir Ralph himself was in command of the im-

perilled fortress. The excitement had stirred him out of his customary gloom. His eyes were bright, and his cheeks flew a patch of colour. His sword was at his side, and he held a musket in his hand.

"That was their third attempt to get over the stockade," he said to Kingswell and D'Antons. "They are filled with the very devil to-day. But I scarcely think that they will come back for more, now that Trigget has got his growlers into working order."

"How did it begin?" asked the Frenchman.

"Why, about three score of them marched up and said they wanted to come in and trade," replied the baronet, "but, as they seemed to have nothing to trade save their bows and spears, Trigget warned them off. Then they went out on the river and began chopping up the *Red Rose* and the *Pelican*. At that we let off a musket, and they retired to cover, from which they soon emerged with reinforcements and tried to carry the place by weight of numbers."

"Hark," said the Frenchman. "What is that they are yelling?"

"My name," replied Ouenwa. "They are my enemies."

"Ah, and so it is our privilege to fight this gentleman's battles for him," remarked D'Antons,

with an exaggerated bow to the lad. "Perhaps this is the explanation of the attack."

"I think not," answered Kingswell, crisply. "They are surprised at discovering him here. Also they are surprised and displeased at seeing me again. They have smelled our powder before, as you have heard, I think."

"Yes, I have heard the heroic tale, monsieur," replied the captain, smiling his thin, one-sided, Continental smile.

The blood mounted in Kingswell's cheek. He turned on his heel without any further words. Ouenwa followed him to the Trigget cabin, whence he was bound for something to eat.

Panounia and his braves retreated across the frozen river, and did not show themselves again that day. In the fort every musket was loaded, the improvised gun-shields were repaired and strengthened, and the guns were again got ready for action. In place of round shot, William Trigget charged them with scrap-iron and slugs of lead.

"When ye has a lot o' mowin' to do in a short time, cut a wide swath," he remarked to Tom Bent.

"Ay, sir," replied Kingswell's boatswain, turning a hawk-like eye on the dark edges of the forest. "Ay, sir, cut a wide swath, an' let the devil make the hay. It be mun's own crop."

At the time of the hunters' return, Mistress Beatrix was looking from the doorway of her father's cabin. Now she knelt in her own chamber, sobbing quietly, with her face buried in her hands. All the bitterness and insecurity of her position had come to her with overmastering force. The sight of Captain d'Antons' thin face and uncovered, bedraggled hair, as he leaned on his musket and talked with her father and the young Englishman, had melted the courage in her heart. She prayed confusedly, half her thoughts with the petitions which she made to her God, and half with the desperate state of her affairs and the features and attitude of the buccaneer.

She was disturbed by some one entering the outer room. She recognized the footsteps as those of Sir Ralph. She got up from her knees, bathed her face and eyes, touched her hair to order with skilful fingers, and opened the door of her chamber. The baronet looked up at the sound.

"Ah, lass," he said, "we've driven the rascals off. They have crossed the river."

With that he fell again to his slow pacing of the room.

"I do not fear the savages," she cried. "Oh, I do think their knives and arrows would be welcome."

"Poor child! poor little lass!" he said, pausing beside her and kissing her tenderly. "You have been weeping," he added, concernedly. "But courage, dear. The fellow is harmless for five long months to come. His fangs are as good as filed, shut off here and surrounded by the snow and the savages."

Evidently the sight of his daughter's distress had dimmed the finer conception of his promise to D'Antons. He looked about him uneasily and sighed.

She laid her face against his coat and held tight to his sleeves.

"I hate him," she whispered. "Oh, my father, I hate him for my own sake as much as I fear him for yours. His every covert glance, his every open attention, stings me like a whip. And yet, out of fear, I must smile and simper, and play the hypocrite."

"No — by God!" exclaimed Westleigh, trembling with emotion. Then, more quietly, "Beatrix, I cannot wear this mask any longer. The fellow is hateful to me. I despise him. How such a creation of the devil's can love you so unswervingly is more than I can fathom. I would rather see you dead than married to him. There — I have broken my word again! Let me go."

He freed himself from the girl's hands, caught up his hat and cloak, and left the cabin. He crossed over to the well-house, where some of the men were grinding axes and cutlasses, and joined feverishly in their simple talk of work, and battle, and adventure. Their honest faces and homely language drove a little of the bitterness of his shame from him. Presently Kingswell and Ouenwa joined the group about the complaining grindstone.

"Come," said Sir Ralph, "and look at the cannon."

He plucked Kingswell by the sleeve. Ouenwa followed them. All three ascended the little platform on which the guns were mounted, by way of a short ladder. The pieces, ready loaded, were snugly covered with tarpaulins that could be snatched off in a turn of the hand.

"A worthy fellow is William Trigget," remarked the baronet. "Ay, he is true as steel."

He laid a caressing hand on the breech of one of the little cannon. "I would trust him, yea, and his good fellows, with anything I possess," he said, "as readily as I trust these growlers to his care."

Just then Ouenwa pointed northward to the wooded bluff that cut into the white valley and hid the settlement from the lower reaches of the river. From beyond the point, moving slowly and

unsteadily, appeared a solitary human figure. Its course lay well out on the level floor of the stream, and the forest growth along the shore did not conceal it from the watchers. It approached uncertainly, as if without a definite goal, and, when within a few hundred yards of the fort, staggered and fell prone.

"What the devil does it mean?" cried Sir Ralph.

Kingswell shook his head, and questioned Ouenwa. The lad continued to gaze out across the open. The sun was low over the western hills, and its light was red on the snow.

"Hurt," he said, presently. "Maybe starved. He is not of Panounia's band."

"How do you know that, lad?" asked the baronet.

"I know," replied the boy. "He is a hunter. He is not of the war-party. He is from the salt water."

"He is usually right when he maintains that a thing is so, without being able to give a reason for it," said Kingswell, quietly. "And, if he is, it seems a pity to let the man die out there under our very eyes."

"God knows I do not want any one to suffer," said the baronet, "but may it not be a trick of this Panounia's, or whatever you call him?"

"No trick," replied Ouenwa; and, without so much as "by your leave," he vaulted over the breastwork of faggots and landed lightly on the snow outside the stockade. Without a moment's hesitation, Kingswell followed. Together they started toward the still figure out on the river, at a brisk run. They had reached the bank before Sir Ralph recovered from his astonishment. He quickly descended to the square, and, without attracting any attention, informed William Trigget of what had happened. Trigget and his son immediately ascended to the guns and drew off their tarpaulins. "We'll cover the retreat, sir," said the mariner. They saw their reckless comrades bend over the prostrate stranger. Then Kingswell lifted the apparently lifeless body and started back at a jog trot. Ouenwa lagged behind, with his head continually over his shoulder. The elder Trigget swore a great oath, and smacked a knotty fist into a leathern palm.

"Them's well-plucked uns," he added.

The baronet and John Trigget agreed silently. They were too intent on the approach of the rescuers to speak. Also, they kept a keen outlook along the woods on the farther shore. But the enemy made no sign; and Kingswell, Ouenwa, and the unconscious stranger reached the stockade in safety. The stranger proved to be none other than

Black Feather, the stalwart and kindly brave who had built his lodge beside the old arrow-maker's, above Wigwam Harbour, in the days of peace. He was carried into Trigget's cabin and dosed with French brandy until he opened his eyes. He looked about him blankly for a second or two, and then his lids fluttered down again. He had not recognized either Kingswell or Ouenwa.

"Oh, the poor lad, the poor lad," cried Dame Trigget. "Whatever has mun been a-doin' now, to get so distressin' scrawny? An' a fine figger, too, though he be a heathen, without a manner o' doubt."

"Never mind his religious beliefs, dame, but get some of your good venison broth inside of him," said Master Kingswell. "That's a treatment that would surely convert any number of heathen."

While they were clustered about Black Feather's couch, D'Antons entered. He peered over Dame Trigget's ample shoulders and looked considerably surprised at finding an unconscious, emaciated Beothic the centre of attraction.

"What's this?" he asked. "A tragedy or a comedy?"

His tone was sour, and too bantering for the occasion.

The baronet turned on him with an expression

of mouth and eye that did not pass unnoticed by the little group.

"Certainly not a comedy, monsieur," he replied, coldly; "and we hope it will not prove a tragedy."

CHAPTER XIV.

A TRICK OF PLAY-ACTING

MEALS were not served in Captain d'Antons' cabin. The little settlement possessed but one servant among all its workers, and that one was Maggie Stone, Mistress Westleigh's old nurse. The care of Sir Ralph's establishment was all she could attend to. So the men who had no women-folk of their own to cook for them were fed by Dame Trigget and her sturdy daughter Joyce, or by the Donnelly women. Kingswell and D'Antons took their meals at Dame Trigget's table, and were served by themselves, with every mark of respect. Ouenwa, Tom Bent, Harding, and Clotworthy shared the Donnellys' board.

A few hours after Black Feather's rescue, Kingswell and D'Antons sat opposite one another at a small table near the hearth of the Triggets' living-room. A stew of venison and a bottle of French wine stood between them. D'Antons took up the bottle, and made as if to fill the other's glass.

"One moment," said Kingswell, raising his hand.

The Frenchman looked at him keenly and set down the vintage. The Englishman leaned forward.

"Captain d'Antons," he said, scarce above a whisper, "a remark that you made to-day seemed to imply that you considered me a braggart. Your remark was in reference to the brushes between the *Pelican* and a party of natives during our cruise from the North. Before I take wine with you to-night, I want you to either withdraw or explain your implication."

While Kingswell spoke, the other's eyes flashed and calmed again. Now his dark face wore an even look of puzzled inquiry. His fine eyes, clear now of the expression of cynicism which so often marred them, held the Englishman's without any sign of either embarrassment or anger. His hand returned to the neck of the bottle and lingered there. Lord, but the drama lost an exceptionally fine interpreter when the high seas claimed Pierre d'Antons! The thin, clean-shaven lips trembled — or was it the wavering of the candle-light?

"My friend," he said, softly, "how unfortunate am I in my stupidity — in my blundering use of the English language. Whatever my words were, when I spoke of having already heard of your

fights with the savages, my meaning was such that no one would take exception to. Did I use the word heroic, monsieur? Then heroic, noble, was what I meant. An Englishman would have made use of a smaller, a simpler word, perhaps; or would have refrained from any display of admiration. Ah, I am unfortunate in my heritage of French and Spanish blood — the blood that is outspoken both for praise and blame."

Poor, honest Kingswell was shaken with conflicting emotions. His heart told him the man was lying. His eyes assured him that he had been grievously mistaken, not only in the matter of the remark concerning the skirmishes with the Beothics, but in his whole opinion of the Frenchman. His blood surged to his head, and whispered that he was a young fool to be hoodwinked so easily. His brain was sadly uncertain. A twinge of pity for the handsome adventurer — for the love-struck buccaneer — went through him. But it faded at remembrance of Sir Ralph's story. He knew the fellow was playing with him.

"Wine, monsieur?" inquired D'Antons, softly, with a smile of infinite sweetness and shy persuasion.

With a mumbled apology, the young Englishman pushed forward his glass, and the red wine swam

to the brim. And all the while he was inwardly cursing his own weakness and the other's strength. He had not the courage to meet the Frenchman's look when they raised their glasses and clinked them across the table. Lord, what a calf he was!

Had he no will of his own? Did he possess neither knowledge of men nor mother wit? Ah, but he rated himself pitilessly as he bent his flushed face over his plate of stew.

When the meal was finished, Kingswell returned to Black Feather's couch, and D'Antons went over to his own cabin. By this time Black Feather had recovered consciousness and swallowed some of Dame Trigget's broth; also, he had recognized Ouenwa and murmured a few words to the lad in his own tongue. But, beyond that, he was too weak to disclose anything of what had happened in Wigwam Harbour after the slaying of Soft Hand. He lay very still, apparently lifeless, except for his quick, bright eyes, which moved restlessly in questioning scrutiny of the strange women and bearded men who sat about the room. Ouenwa held one of the transparent hands and smiled assuringly.

For half an hour Kingswell sat beside the man he had rescued so courageously from death by starvation. Then, feeling the heat of the room and the confusion of his thoughts too much to enter-

tain calmly, he went out into the cold and darkness and paced up and down. All unknowing, he kicked the snow viciously every step. He was still in a perturbed state of mind and temper when William Trigget approached him through the gloom and touched his elbow.

"Askin' your pardon, master," he said, standing close, "but what of that Injun in there? Be he really sick, or be he playing a game?"

"He is surely sick, and he is just as surely not playing a game," replied Kingswell. "But why do you ask? The fellow is a friend of Ouenwa's, and was one of old Soft Hand's warriors."

"Ay, sir, but maybe mun has changed his coat," said Trigget, "an' has shammed sick just to get carried inside the fort. There be something goin' on outside, for certain."

"What?" asked the other.

Then Trigget told how he had been startled, while standing under the gun-platform, by a sound of scrambling outside the stockade. He had crawled noiselessly up the ladder and looked over the breastworks about the guns. He had been able to distinguish something darker than the surrounding darkness crouched against the palisade under him. The thing had moved cautiously. He had detached a faggot from one of the bundles beside him, for lack

of a better weapon, and had hurled it down at the black form. There had sounded a stifled cry, and the thing had vanished in the night.

"It were one o' they savages, I know," concluded Trigget.

Kingswell forgot his personal grievance in the face of this menace from the hidden enemy.

"The guards should be doubled," he said. "But come, we must let Sir Ralph know of it."

They crossed the yard to the baronet's cabin and knocked on the door. Maggie Stone admitted them to the outer room, where Sir Ralph and Mistress Beatrix were seated, the girl reading aloud to her father by the light of one poor candle. But the great fire on the hearth had the place fairly illuminated.

William Trigget, undismayed by fog and bad weather, cool in any risk of land or sea, was too abashed at the presence of the lady to tell his story. So Master Kingswell told it for him.

"The guards must be doubled," said Sir Ralph.

"They be that already, sir," replied Trigget, breaking the spell of the bright eyes that surveyed him.

"That is well," answered the baronet. "There is nothing else to be done, at least until morning, but sleep light and keep your muskets handy."

Kingswell and the master mariner returned to the darkness without.

"I will stake my word," said Kingswell, "that the place is surrounded by the devils even now, and that they will try again to get a man over the wall to unbar the gates."

CHAPTER XV.

THE HIDDEN MENACE

NEITHER Kingswell nor Trigget found time for sleep that night. D'Antons also kept awake, though he spent only a few hours out-of-doors. His candle burned until daylight. Ouenwa experienced a restless night beside Black Feather's couch. From ten o'clock until two Tom Bent, John Trigget, and the younger Donnelly were on guard, with cutlasses on their hips and half-pikes in their hands — for a musket would have proved but an unsatisfactory weapon to a man engaged in a sudden scuffle in the dark. One man was placed on the gun-platform, another at the gate, and a third on the roof of the storehouse. Kingswell and William Trigget moved continually from one point to another. At two o'clock the elder Donnelly, Clotworthy, and Harding relieved their companions. But the two officers remained at their self-imposed duty.

At last dawn outlined the eastern horizon. Kingswell, who had been pacing the length of the

riverward stockade for the past hour, sighed with relief, yawned, and was about to retire to D'Antons' cabin, when William Trigget approached him at a run. The master mariner's face was ghastly above his bushy whiskers.

"Come this way, sir," he murmured, huskily.

Kingswell followed him to the storehouse and up to the roof, by way of a rough ladder that leaned against the wall. There, on the outward slope of the roof, where the snow was trampled and broken, sprawled the body of Peter Clotworthy.

"What! Asleep!" exclaimed Kingswell, peering close. The light was not strong enough to disclose the features of the recumbent sentinel.

"Ay, an' sound enough, God knows," replied Trigget, "with no chance o' wakin' this side o' the Judgment-Seat."

"Dead?" cried the other, sinking to his knees beside the body. He pressed his hand against the mariner's side, held it there for a moment, and withdrew it, wet with blood. He raised it toward the growing illumination of the east, staring at it with wide eyes. "Blood," he murmured. "Stabbed without a squeal — without a whimper, by Heaven!" Then he ripped out an oath, and followed it close with a prayer for his dead comrade's soul. For all his golden curls, this Bernard Kings-

well had a hot and ready tongue — and a temper to suit, when occasion offered.

The two discoverers of the tragedy remained on the roof of the storehouse for some time. The light strengthened and spread on their right, and, at last, gave them a clear, gray view of the narrow clearing and wooded hummocks to the north. On the snow below them, which was otherwise unmarked, they saw the imprints of one pair of moccasined feet. The marks did not lead to or from the near cover of the woods, but to the south, around the fort. The telltale snow showed how Clotworthy's murderer had approached close under the stockade, and, after his silent deed of violence, had jumped a distance of about twenty feet, from the roof of the store, and landed on all fours. A stain of blood, evidently from the reeking knife in the slayer's hand, smirched the snow where it was broken by his fall. From there the steps returned by the same course, but at a distance of about ten paces from the stockade.

Kingswell looked from the tracks in the snow to the colourless, distorted features of the dead seaman. Then his gaze met Trigget's deep-set eyes. He was pale, and his lips were drawn in a hard line, as if the frost had stiffened them.

"Poor Clotworthy," he murmured, and swal-

lowed as if his throat were dry. "Poor devil, knifed into eternity without a fighting chance. See, he was clubbed first and then knifed — felled and bled like an ox in a shambles! Ten nights of this hellishness will account for the whole garrison."

With a broad, deep-sea oath, Trigget replied that there'd be no ten nights of it.

They lifted the stiff body that had, so lately, been animated by the fearless spirit of Richard Clotworthy, able seaman, to the ground and carried it reverently to the Donnelly cabin. The other inmates of the little settlement were deeply affected by the sight, and by Kingswell's story. The younger men were for setting out immediately and driving the Beothics from the woods on the far side of the river. But the wiser heads prevailed against such recklessness, arguing that the only thing to be done was to remain constantly on guard. The women wept. Ouenwa, trembling with sorrow and rage, placed his fine belt and beaded quiver beside the body of his dead comrade, and vowed, in English and Beothic, that he would avenge this murder as he intended to avenge the murders of his father and his grandfather.

The day passed without any sign of the hidden enemy. Kingswell slept until noon. By evening Black Feather had recovered enough strength to

enable him to tell his pitiful story to Ouenwa. His lodge, and that of Montaw, the arrow-maker, had been torn down by the followers of Panounia shortly after the departure of the *Pelican* from Wigwam Harbour. Montaw had died fighting. Black Feather, grievously wounded, had been bound and carried far up the River of Three Fires. His wife and children also had been captured and maltreated. The ships in the bay had looked on at the unequal struggle ashore without demonstrations of any kind. Upon reaching the village on the river, Black Feather had been driven to the meanest work — work unbecoming a warrior of his standing — and his wife and children had been led farther up-stream, very likely to Wind Lake. Black Feather had seen the body of Soft Hand lying exposed on the top of a knoll, at the mercy of birds and beasts. He had bided his time. At last he had gnawed the thongs with which his tormentors bound him at night, and had safely made his escape. He could not say how long ago that was. Days and nights had become strangely mixed in his desperate mind. He had lived on such birds and hares as he had been able to kill with sticks. Always he had kept up his journey, shaping his course toward the salt water, in the hope of meeting some tribesmen who might have remained loyal to the murdered chief.

But he had met with nobody in all that desolate journey, until, only the day before, he had recovered consciousness in Fort Beatrix.

That night, John Trigget was attacked at his post on the gun-platform, and in the struggle that ensued was cut shrewdly about the arm. So sudden and noiseless was the onslaught out of the dark that he fought in silence, only remembering to shout for help after the savage had squirmed from his embrace and escaped. His arm was bandaged by Sir Ralph, and Tom Bent and Ouenwa took his place. But daylight arrived without any further demonstration on the part of the enemy.

By this time the little garrison was bitten by a restlessness that would not be denied. Even Kingswell and William Trigget were for making some sort of attack upon the hidden band beyond the river. D'Antons, contrary to his habit, had nothing to say either for or against an aggressive movement. Sir Ralph was for quietly and cautiously awaiting development; but, seeing the spirit of the men, he agreed that five of the garrison should sally forth in search of the enemy.

"Whom I have not a doubt you'll find," concluded the baronet, wearily, "though what the devil you'll do with them then is more than I can venture to predict."

Under William Trigget's supervision, one of the cannon was taken from the platform and mounted on a heavy and solid flat of logs, and that, in turn, was placed on a sled. On the same sled were fastened rammers and mops and bags of powder and shot. The daring party was made up of Master Kingswell, William Trigget, Ouenwa, Tom Bent, and the younger Donnelly. D'Antons did not volunteer his services on the expedition. The men were all well armed with muskets and cutlasses, and all save Ouenwa had fastened steel breastplates under their coats. As they marched away, Mistress Westleigh waved them "Godspeed" with a scarf of Spanish lace, from where she stood in the open gate between her father and Captain d'Antons.

The little party moved down the bank and across the river slowly and with commendable caution. Trigget and Kingswell walked ahead, and kept a sharp lookout on the dark edges of the forest. Donnelly and Tom Bent followed about ten paces behind, dragging the gun. Ouenwa scouted along on the left, with a musket and a lighted match, which he feared far worse than he did any number of Beothic warriors. The river was crossed without accident on the wide trail left by the enemy's retreat.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE CLOVEN HOOF

Sir Ralph Westleigh was in the storehouse, Maggie Stone was gossiping with Dame Trigget, and Beatrix was alone by the fire when Captain d'Antons rapped on the cabin door, and entered without waiting for a summons. He was dressed in his bravest suit and finest boots. After closing the door behind him, he bowed low to the girl at the farther end of the room. She instantly stood up and curtseyed with a deal of grace, but no warmth whatever.

"My father is not in, Captain d'Antons," she said.

He smiled and approached her with every show of deference.

"Ah, mademoiselle," he murmured, "I have not come to see the good baronet. I have come to learn my fate from the dearest lips in the world."

The girl blushed crimson, with a tumult of emotions that almost forced the tears past her lids.

Fear, hate, and a reckless joy at the thought that she was done with pretence struggled in her heart. She tried to speak, but her voice caught in her throat, and accomplished nothing but a dry sob.

D'Antons' eyes shone with ardour. The hope which had been somewhat clouded of late flashed clear again. "Beatrix," he cried, softly, "I have wooed you long. Is it not that I have won at last beyond peradventure? Do not deny it, my sweet." He caught her to him, and attempted to kiss her bright lips; but, with a low cry and a quite unexpected display of strength, she wrenched herself from his embrace. She did not try to leave the room. She did not call for help. She faced him, with flashing eyes and angry cheeks and clinched hands.

The fellow stood uncertain for a moment, showing his chagrin and amazement like any country clown. But his recovery was quick. His mouth took on a thin smile; his eyes darkened with sinister shadows. He looked the girl coolly up and down. He laughed softly.

"This feigned anger adds to your beauty, Beatrix," he said.

"I beg you to leave me, sir," she replied, trembling. "Your presence is distasteful to me."

"A sudden turn," said he. "Now a month ago,

or even a week ago, you seemed of a different mind. As for the days of our first meeting in merry London — ah, then your lips were not so unattainable."

"I hate you," she murmured. "I despise you. I loath you. You taint the air for me. Dog, to make a boast of having filched a kiss from a light-hearted girl — who did not know you for the common fellow that you are."

"Beatrix," cried the man, "this is no stage comedy. We are not players. I have asked you, too many times, to be my wife. I ask you once more. You know that your father's life is in my hands. Tell me now, will you promise to marry me, or will you let your father go to the gallows in the spring, and this plantation be put to the torch? Whatever your choice, my beauty, you will accompany me to New Spain next summer. It is for you to say whether you go as my wife or my mistress."

At that the girl's face went white as paper. But her eyes were steady.

D'Antons lowered his gaze. He was half-ashamed, nay, more than that, of his words.

"It would be hard to say," she replied, very softly, "which would be the most dishonourable position for an English gentlewoman to occupy. That of your wife, I think, monsieur — for, as your wife, she would be known by your name."

His shame leaped to anger at that soft-spoken insult. He caught her roughly by the wrists.

"Nay," she said, "you must be more gentle. You seem to forget that you are not sacking a defenceless town. Also, you forget that you have not a friend or a follower in this wilderness, and that any man or woman in the fort would shoot you down like a dog at a word from me."

For a little while they eyed each other steadily enough — her face still beautiful despite the bantering cruelty of lips and eyes, and the loathing in every line of it; his the face of a devil. Then, with a muttered oath, he closed his fingers on her tender flesh, pressing with all his strength.

"Ah, my fine lady," he cried, harshly, "you think yourself strong enough to flout Pierre d'Antons, do you? Strong enough to spurn the protection of a soldier and a gentleman! Cry now for your girl-faced Kingswell — for your golden-haired fellow countryman."

By that even her lips were colourless, and her eyes were wet. "There is no need," she said, bravely, "for I hear my father at the door."

D'Antons dropped her wrists and took a backward step. In doing so, his heel struck the leg of a stool, and the scabbard of his sword rang discordantly. He reeled, recovering himself just as

Sir Ralph crossed the threshold. Before either of the men had time to speak, Beatrix darted forward and struck the Frenchman savagely across the face with her open hand. Then, without a word of either explanation or greeting to her father, she passed D'Antons swiftly, sped down the length of the room, and entered her own chamber.

"What does this mean, captain?" inquired the baronet, coldly. D'Antons, scarcely recovered from the blow, strode toward him.

"What does it mean?" he cried. "It means, my fine old cock, that your neck will be pulled out of joint when we get away from this God-forgotten desolation. Ah, you liar, why did I not have you strung up to a yard-arm when you were safely in my power? Stab me, but I've been too soft — and my reward is insults from the wench of an exiled card-cheat and murderer."

His voice was raised almost to a scream. His face quivered with passion. He thrust it within a few inches of the baronet's.

"Liar and cheat," he cried, furiously.

"Softly, softly," replied Sir Ralph. "I cannot abide being bawled at in my own house, especially by such scum of a French muck heap as you. Keep your distance, fellow, or, by God, I'll do you a hurt. What's this! You'd presume?"

They withdrew on the instant. The two swords came clear in the same second of time.

"*Gabier de potence,*" cried D'Antons.

"*Canaille,*" replied the baronet, blandly. Evidently the rasp of the steel had mended his temper. He even smiled a little at his adoption of his adversary's mother-tongue.

The men were excellently matched as swordsmen. But not more than half a dozen passes had been made and parried before Beatrix ran into the room, crying to them to put up their swords.

"Go back," said the baronet, with his eyes on D'Antons, "go back to your room, my daughter, and make a prayer for this fellow's soul. It will soon stand in need of a petition for God's mercy."

The girl went softly back and closed the door, in an effort to shut out the rasping and metallic striking of the blades. She prayed, but for strength to her father's wrist and not for the Frenchman's soul. She was afraid — desperately afraid. The truth of her father's skill in French sword-play had been kept from her. To her he was but a courteous, middle-aged gentleman who needed her care, and who had been maligned and robbed by the world into which he had been born. He was a good father. He had been a loving and consid-

erate husband. She knelt beside her bed and beseeched God to succour him in this desperate strait.

In the meantime the fight went on in the outer room with more the air of a harmless bout for practice than a duel to the death. It was altogether a question of point and point, in the Continental manner, perfectly free from the swinging attack and clanging defence of the English style. The combatants were cool, to judge by appearances. Neither seemed in any hurry. The thrusts and lunges, though in fact as quick as thought, were delivered with a manner suggestive of elegant leisure.

"I believe you have the advantage of me by about three inches of steel," remarked the baronet, diverting a lightning thrust from its intended course.

"A chance of the game," replied D'Antons, smiling grimly.

Just then the baronet's foot slipped on the edge of a book of verses which Mistress Beatrix had left on the floor. For a second he was swerved from his balance; and, when he recovered, it was to feel the warm blood running down his breast from a slight incision in his left shoulder. But his recovery was as masterly as it was swift, and the Frenchman found himself more severely pressed

than before, despite the advantage he possessed in the superior length of his sword. The little wound counted for nothing.

Just what the outcome of the fight would have been, if an untimely interruption in the person of Maggie Stone had not intervened, it is hard to say. Perhaps D'Antons' youth would have claimed the victory in the long run, or perhaps the baronet's excellent composure. In skill they were nicely matched, though the Englishman displayed superiority enough to even the difference in the length of the blades. But why take time for idle surmises? Maggie Stone, looking in, all unheeded, at the open door, saw her beloved master engaged in a desperate combat with a person whom she despised as well as feared. She saw the sodden stain of blood on her master's doublet. In her hand she held a skillet which she had just borrowed from Dame Trigget. Without waiting to announce herself, she rushed into the room and dealt Captain d'Antons a resounding whack on the head with the iron bowl of the utensil. The long sword fell from the benumbed fingers and clanged on the floor. With a low, guttural cry, the Frenchman followed it, and sprawled, unconscious, at the feet of the surprised and indignant baronet.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE CONFIDENCE OF YOUTH

MASTER KINGSWELL and his party returned from their daring reconnoitre early in the afternoon. They had not met with the enemy, though they had found the camp and torn down the temporary lodges. After that they had followed the broad trail of the retreat for several miles, and had discharged the cannon twice into the inscrutable woods. Their daring had been rewarded by the capture of about two hundred pounds of smoked salmon and dried venison.

Both Kingswell and William Trigget were unable to account for the fact that the savages had not attacked them in the cover of the woods. In reality they owed their bloodless victory to the presence of the little cannon. That third and last discharge of slugs, on the day of the big fight, had killed three of the braves, wounded five more, and inspired an hysterical terror in the hearts of the rest. But for that, the hidden enemy would

not have been content with playing a waiting game and with the attempted killing of one man each night; and neither would they have retired, so undemonstratively, before the advance of the five. But, despite their fear of the cannon, they had no intention of giving up the siege of the fort. They placed trust in the darkness of night and their own cunning.

Kingswell and the elder Trigget were drawn aside by Sir Ralph. The baronet looked less care-haunted than he had for years.

"D'Antons and I have broken our truce," he whispered, "and behold, the heavens have not fallen, — nor even the poor defences of this plantation." He smiled cheerfully. "The great captain alone has come to grief," he added. "Maggie Stone saved him from my hand by felling him herself with some sort of stew-pan. I was frantically angry at the time, but am glad now that I did not have to kill the rogue."

"Such cattle are better dead, sir," remarked Trigget, coolly.

"I grant you that, my good William," replied Sir Ralph, "but he is harmless as a new-born babe, after all — and we'll see that he remains so."

Then he told them the story of the duel, and of what had led to it. Kingswell flushed and paled.

"God's mercy!" he cried, "but I would I had been in your boots, sir."

"You'd have died in them, more than likely," replied the baronet, laying a hand on the other's shoulder. "D'Antons has a rare knowledge of swordsmanship, and eye and wrist to back it with."

"Even so," replied Kingswell, "it would have been — it would have been a pleasure to die in such a cause." He blushed, and hurriedly added, "But I doubt if he'd have killed me, for all his gimcrackery and side-stepping. I've seen such gentry hopping and poking for hours, when one good cut from the shoulder would have ended their tricks."

The baronet smiled kindly, though with a tinge of sadness. "Ah, what a fine thing is the heart of youth," he said, "and the confidence of youth. I even bow to the ignorance of youth. But, my dear boy, valour and confidence are not more than half the battle, after all. The edge is a fine thing, and has spilled a deal of blood since the hammering of the first sword; but the point becomes no less deadly simply because one stout young Englishman is ignorant of its potency. Lad, if it were not that I have won the distinction — beside many a less enviable one — of being the best swordsman in England, I could not have withstood D'Antons'

play for long enough to make sure of the colour of his eyes."

Kingswell felt like a fool, and did not know which way to turn his abashed countenance. Both Sir Ralph and Trigget felt sorry for him.

"But I can assure you, Bernard," said the former, "that, if it came to a matter of cutlasses, neither the Frenchman nor I would stand up for long against either you or Trigget."

"It is kind of you to say so," replied Kingswell, staring over the baronet's shoulder at nothing in particular, "but I haven't a doubt that even Maggie Stone, with her stew-pan, would be more than a match for me."

William Trigget laughed boisterously at that. "We must ease the young gentleman's temper, sir," he said to the baronet. "I have a pair of single-sticks."

"Get them," said the baronet. He slipped his hand under Kingswell's arm and led him into the cabin. Beatrix welcomed him cordially, with a shy compliment to his bravery thrown in. The youth immediately felt better in his pride.

"Say nothing of D'Antons, or the duel," Sir Ralph whispered in his ear. "He is safe in his own bed, being nursed conscientiously, if not over-tenderly, by Maggie Stone."

Kingswell seated himself beside Mistress Beatrix on the bench by the fire. He noticed that she had been weeping. Her eyes seemed all the brighter for it. He gave her a detailed account of the brief expedition from which he had just returned. He told of the cluster of lodges, the cooking-fires still burning, the utensils and food scattered about, and not a human being in sight.

"And what if you had seen the savages?" she asked. "Surely, four Englishmen and a lad could do nothing against such a host?"

"We would have fallen in the first flight of arrows," replied Kingswell.

"Then why did you risk it?"

The young man shook his head and laughed. "Some one must take risks," he said, "else all warfare would come to a standstill."

The girl was looking down at her hands, and reflectively twisting a jewelled ring around and around on one slim finger. "And I wish it would with all my heart," she sighed. "Warfare and bloodshed — they are the devil's inventions, and strike innocent and guilty alike."

"Nay," replied Kingswell, "there is more harm done to the innocent in courts and fine assemblies, and at the sheltered card-tables, than on all the battle-fields of the world. War is a good surgeon,

and, if he sometimes lets the good blood with the bad, why, that's just a risk we must accept."

Beatrix raised a flushed face, and eyed him squarely. "You preach like a Puritan," she said, "with your condemnation of courts and play. You should give my father the benefit of some of your wisdom. His friends have all been generous with such help."

Kingswell bit his lip, and for an awkward minute studied the toes of his moccasins. Presently he looked up.

"I am sorry," he said.

Her glance softened.

"I am as ignorant of battle-fields as I am of courts," he added. "I am ignorant of everything."

His voice was low and bitter. Beatrix laughed softly.

"Pray do not take it so much to heart," she said. "Nothing is so easily mended as ignorance."

He looked at her gravely.

"I am going to ask Sir Ralph to give me lessons in French sword-play," he said. "Is there nothing that you would teach me?"

"Embroidery," she replied, "and how to brew a Madeira punch."

At that moment the baronet opened the door and admitted William Trigget. The master mari-

ner carried a pair of stout oak sticks with basket-work guards under his arm.

"Does your education commence so soon?" inquired Beatrix of Kingswell.

"Somebody's does," he replied, with a return of his old confidence. With the lady's permission and Sir Ralph's assistance, Trigget and Kingswell cleared the middle of the floor of rugs and the table. They removed their outer coats. Trigget was the taller, as well as the heavier, of the two. Without further preliminaries, they fell on, and the dry whacking of the sticks against one another, varied occasionally by the muffled thud of wood against cloth, filled the cabin. It was a fine display of the English style — slash, cut, and guard, with never a side-step nor retreat. After ten minutes of it, Trigget cried "enough," and stumbled out of the danger zone. His right arm was numb. His shoulders and sides ached, and his head swam; Kingswell was without a touch.

Neither Beatrix nor Sir Ralph, nor yet Trigget, for that matter, concealed their astonishment at the result of the bout. "And now, sir," said Kingswell, "I should like a lesson in the other style."

The baronet took down a pair of light, edgeless blades with blunted points. After a few words as to the manner of standing, they crossed the lithe

weapons. In a second Kingswell's was jerked from his hand and sent bounding across the room. He recovered it without a word and returned to the combat. By this time the light was failing. After about a dozen passes, he was again disarmed. His gray eyes danced, and he laughed gaily as he picked up his weapon.

"I see the way of that trick," he said.

He returned to the one-sided engagement with, if possible, more energy and eagerness than before. Already he had the attitude and stamping manner of attack to perfection. Sir Ralph tested his defence again and again without slipping through. Three times he tried the circular, twisting stroke with which he had disarmed the novice before without success. Wondering, and slightly irritated, he put out fresh efforts, and forgot all about his defence. The blades rasped, and rang, and whispered. The blunted point was at Kingswell's breast, at his throat, at his eyes; but it never touched. And, just as Mistress Beatrix was about to bid the combatants cease their exertions, because of the gathering dusk, Kingswell's point touched the insignificant but painful wound on the baronet's shoulder. With an exclamation, in which disgust, pain, and amusement were queerly blended, Sir Ralph dropped his foil to the floor.

CHAPTER XVIII.

EVENTS AND REFLECTIONS

Captain Pierre d'Antons' injury kept him indoors for ten days. During that time he saw nobody but Maggie Stone, Bernard Kingswell, and Ouenwa. Kingswell could not help feeling sorry for him, in spite of the enmity and distrust in his heart. D'Antons made no mention of how he came by his cut head to the young Englishman. He knew that the other knew — and sometimes he wondered how much. He accepted such attentions at Kingswell's hand as any fair-hearted man will make to any invalid, with what seemed gratitude and humility. But under the mask his blood was raging. If his hand trembled while receiving a glass of water from the Englishman, it was as much from the effort of restraining an outburst of hate as from weakness. Kingswell, clear-sighted by now, suspected the real state of the other's feelings.

During the days of D'Antons' inactivity, the

Beothics made three night attacks on the fort. Two were repetitions of the one-man demonstrations of cunning, in which Clotworthy had met his death and young Trigget had received the cut on his arm. Happily both had failed. The third was an attack in force, made in that darkest hour just before the first stirrings of dawn. By good fortune, both William Trigget and Kingswell were dressed and about at the time of the first alarm. They both ran to the gun-platform, and there found Tom Bent desperately engaged with two savages, who had scaled the stockade over the massed shoulders of their fellows. The intruders were speedily hurled backward, they and a portion of the breastworks falling on the devoted heads below. At the moment, Dame Trigget puffed valiantly up the ladder and handed a torch to her husband. In a second the coverings were pulled from the guns. The muzzles of the little weapons were declined as far as they would go, and the fuses were ignited. Comprehending the trend of affairs, some of the enemy let fly their arrows at the little group in the torch's illumination. Both William Trigget and Tom Bent were hit, and fell to their knees. In the same instant of time the guns belched their flame and screaming missiles into the wavering mass of savages. A yell of terror and pain, made

up of many individual cries, followed the reports of the guns like an echo.

But along the opposite stockade, things were not going so well for the settlers. About a dozen of the enemy had gained foothold on the roof of the storehouse, and from there had jumped into the yard, driving Peter Harding before them. They were immediately engaged by the Donnellys. Torches and lanterns glowed and swung about the edges of the conflict. Matters were looking serious for the defenders (who by that time were joined by Sir Ralph, Ouenwa, and the redoubtable Maggie Stone) when the discharge of artillery across the square turned the courage of the attackers to water, and their victory to defeat. Six of them were cut down while endeavouring to escape by way of the ladder against the wall of the storehouse. The rest got away, but none of them unscathed. With that the fight ended, though the defenders kept to their posts until broad daylight.

In the morning it was discovered that one of the six warriors who remained within the fort was still alive. Sir Ralph had him carried to D'Antons' cabin, and his wounds attended to. They were not of a serious nature. Black Feather, who was a convalescent by now, recognized a bitter enemy in the disabled captive. He was for despatching

him straightway, recalling the bitter days of his slavery and the loss of wife and children. He was dragged away by Kingswell, and Ouenwa remonstrated with him at some length.

The little garrison had suffered in the brief engagement. William Trigget had halted three arrows with his big body. Only one had reached the flesh, thanks to his thick garments of wool and hide; but that one had cut deep into the muscles of his chest, and the others had bruised his ribs. Tom Bent was more seriously injured, with a gaping slash in the side of his neck. Young Peter Harding was laid on his back with a cracked rib, dealt him by a stone-headed axe, and seemed in a fair way to remain on the sick-list for some time to come.

The dead Beothics were carried out and buried in a shallow grave near the honest Clotworthy's desolate resting-place.

It was evident, from the smoke above the woods, that the enemy were still maintaining the siege, and at even closer range than before. The continual sight of that evidence of their presence, and the idleness due to confinement within a few hundred yards of the stockade, began to tell on the spirits of the settlers. It became a matter of difficulty to forget the wounded men in such restricted

quarters. Bandages and salves, gruels and plasters, seemed to pervade every corner. Every one who was not an invalid was a nurse. In addition, the lack of fresh meat was beginning to be felt. Sir Ralph, who had seemed more cheerful just after his affair with D'Antons, was fallen back on his black moods. Mistress Beatrix's cheeks and eyes were losing something of their radiance, though she carried herself bravely and cheerfully.

Master Kingswell, who had a knack with bandages and such, found his time fully occupied. He inspected all the wounded twice a day, and he and Ouenwa took entire charge of D'Antons and the captured Beothic. His only recreation was a few hours of each afternoon or evening spent with the Westleighs. He and the baronet fenced, if the visit happened to be paid during the day; if in the evening, they sometimes played chess, or, better still, the baronet paced the room in uneasy meditation, and the youth and the maiden bent their young heads above the pieces of carved ivory.

Behind the girl's laughter and hospitality, Kingswell detected an aloofness toward him that had not been noticeable during the first days of their acquaintance. The thing was very fine — so fine that it was scarcely a matter of attitude or manner. One of duller perception would have missed it alto-

gether. It was in no wise a physical aloofness, save in a certain reservation in the glance of the eye and the softer notes of the voice. But it worried the young man. He felt that he had failed in something — that she had set a standard for him, and that he had not risen to it. With native shrewdness, he suspected that she considered him crude and conceited. He knew that she considered him brave, and that she admired his courage; but he was equally sure that his prowess with the single-sticks against Trigget, and his increasing dexterity with the rapier, did not tell in his favour in her eyes. "Women are evidently as unreasonable as the poets depict them," he decided, and tried to acquire a modest demeanour. But the ability to do so had not been born in him, and no matter how low and self-abasing his speech, pride shone in his clear eyes and self-confidence was in the carriage of head and shoulders.

The baronet's attitude toward Master Kingswell became more affectionate every day. He recognized the sterling qualities in the youth, — the honesty, courage, and loyalty, as well as the physical and mental gifts of quick eye and wrist and clear brain. He derived no little comfort from his presence in the fort. He felt that in this golden-haired son of the Bristol merchant-knight his daughter

had a second guardian. He knew that the Kingswell blood, though not noble by the rating of the College of Heralds, was to be depended on as surely as any in England. In happier times he had known and enjoyed a certain amount of familiarity with the elder Kingswell, and had found the broad-minded merchant's heart as sound as his self-imported wines. He remembered the wife, too, as a person of distinction and kindliness.

For his own part, the baronet realized more surely, with the passing of each narrow day, that life offered no further allurement to him. The slight exhilaration that had followed the defiance and defeat of D'Antons was of no more lasting a quality than the flavour of a vintage. The Frenchman was harmless, poor devil, like the rest of them; and in as fair a way as himself to leave his bones in the wilderness. Yes, he felt a twinge of pity for him! He could understand that, to an adventurer like D'Antons, unrequited love was the very devil, — worse, perhaps, than the fever of the gaming-table. But of course he felt no regret for having put an end (as he believed) to the fellow's audacious suit. His regret — if, indeed, he entertained any concerning so recent an event in his career — was that he had not pricked the buccaneer's bubble of false power months before — de-

spite the promise he had made him. But as things had turned out, — as Time had dealt the cards, to use his own words, — the other's behaviour had allowed him to strike without too flagrant a breach of his word of honour. He was thankful for that.

CHAPTER XIX.

TWO OF A KIND

WHEN Pierre d'Antons was able to move about again, he found himself shunned, without disguise, by every one of the inmates of the fort save Bernard Kingswell. The West Country sailors, no longer under orders to treat him with respect and obedience, simply grunted inaudibly and turned their backs when he addressed them. Of course, the door of Sir Ralph's habitation was closed against him. He spent almost all his time in his own cabin, with the captured and slowly convalescing Beothic for companion. He read a great deal, and thought more. Now and again, in a fit of chagrin, he would stamp about the room, cursing, crying out for a chance of revenge, with clinched hands uplifted. During such paroxysms, the Beothic would watch him closely, with understanding in his gaze. The savage was no linguist; but hate burns the same signals in eyes of every nationality.

D'Antons continued to suffer from his infatuation for Mistress Westleigh. The blow of the skillet had changed nothing of that. Whatever his passion lacked in the higher attributes of love, it lacked nothing in vitality. It was a madness. It was a bitter desire. How gladly he would risk death, fighting for her — and yet he would not have hesitated a moment about killing her happiness, to win his own, had an opportunity offered. Self-sacrifice, worshipful devotion, and tenderness were things apart from what he considered his love for the beautiful English girl.

In this state of mind he built a hundred wild dreams of carrying her away, and of ultimately imprisoning her, should she still be averse to his love, in a Southern stronghold. Then a realization of his position would come over him and set him stamping and raving. To Kingswell, despite the fire in his heart, he showed a contrite and friendly exterior. He wondered if he could not turn the young man to some use. He gave the matter his attention.

One evening D'Antons told a plaintive story to Kingswell. All through it the Englishman was itching to be gone; for he spent no more of his time than was absolutely necessary under the Frenchman's roof. But the narrator held him with

a mournful eye. The tale was an alleged history of Pierre d'Antons' youth. It dealt with a great family that had fallen upon lean years; with a ruinous château, a proud and studious father, and a saintly mother; with a boyhood of noble dreams and few pleasures; with a youth of hard and honourable soldiering wherever the banners of France led the way; and with an early manhood of high adventure and achievement in the Western colonies.

Kingswell listened coldly, though the other's voice fairly trembled with emotion. He believed no more of the tale than if he had already heard the truth of the matter — which was, in plain English, that D'Antons was the bastard of a blackleg nobleman by a Spanish dancer; that he had spent his youth as a pot-boy on French ships, and had won, by courage and cunning, to the position of a captain of buccaneers in early manhood. The achievements in the Western colonies had been matters of the wrecking and plundering of what others had built; the high adventures — God spare me the telling of them!

After Kingswell left him, the pirate fell into one of his reddest moods. He was sure that the pink-cheeked youth had not believed a word of his story — had been laughing up his sleeve at the most touching passages. He was sorry that he had not

twisted the lad's neck instead of concluding the narrative. It was a sheer waste of breath, this artistic lying to such a pig's head! He jumped to his feet, with a violence that almost startled the Beothic to outcry, and flung himself about the room like a madman. He kicked the stolid logs of the walls. He knocked the few pieces of furniture out of his erratic course, and spilled his books and papers, quills and ink, to the floor: all this without any ringing oaths or blistering curses. His rage worked inward, as bodily wounds sometimes bleed. It played the devil with his limbs, his features, and his hands, but found no ease in articulation. A trickle of blood ran down his chin, from where he had set a tooth into his lower lip. Withal, he was such a daunting spectacle that Red Cloud, the Beothic, crouched fearfully against the wall, and followed his movements with wide eyes; for, though a mighty warrior in his own estimation, Red Cloud was a craven at heart.

Presently the tumult of the madness ceased, and the victim of it sank languidly into a chair beside the Beothic's couch. He groaned and shivered. For awhile he sat limp, with his thin face hidden between his hands. Looking up, his eyes met the eyes of the native. In their furtive regard, he read that which suggested a new move. Though, owing

to an inborn caution, he had never displayed a knowledge of the Beothic language to his fellow settlers, and had refrained from using any words of it before Ouenwa, he had picked up a fair idea of it during his sojourn at Fort Beatrix. Hitherto he had paid but scant attention to Red Cloud, for he entertained the Spanish attitude of intolerance toward uncivilized peoples; but now he leaned forward and spoke kindly to his companion.

It was late when Kingswell and Ouenwa returned to D'Antons' cabin. Under the new order of things, Ouenwa had volunteered his services as assistant night-guard of the two prisoners — for the Frenchman was virtually a prisoner. It was their custom to keep watch turn and turn about, in two hours' vigils, one sleeping while the other sat in a comfortable chair by the hearth. Their couch was also by the hearth. This precaution was taken for fear of some treachery on the part of Red Cloud.

When the two entered the outer room, the fire was burning brightly, and by its ruddy light they saw the muffled figure of the Beothic, face to the wall, in the far corner. They shot the bar of the door. When the morning was well advanced, they opened windows and door, and replenished the fire. Kingswell drew aside the curtain between the rooms, and looked in to see how D'Antons was faring.

His fire was out and he was still abed. Kingswell moved noiselessly across the floor and peered close. What an awkward figure the graceful buccaneer cut in his sleep! He laid his hand on the shapeless shoulder. It encountered nothing but yielding pelts and blankets. He dragged the things to the floor frantically. His exclamation brought Ouenwa to his side. The Englishman pointed a finger of dismay at the demolished dummy.

"Tricked!" he cried. "Rip me, but what a fine jailer I am!" They rushed back to the other room and investigated the figure on the Beothic's couch. That, too, proved to be a shape of rolled furs and bedding. Red Cloud also had faded away.

News of the disappearance of D'Antons and the savage went through the fort like an electric current. The settlers were more interested and surprised over it than concerned. Even the invalids sat up and conjectured on the captain's object in fleeing to the outer wilderness, and the doubtful but inevitable reception by the natives. They could hardly bring themselves to the belief that he and Red Cloud had gone as fellow conspirators, remembering the haughty Frenchman's bearing toward the aborigines with whom he had traded on occasions.

William Trigget shook his head when he heard the story, and rated the men who had been on duty

along the palisade with unsparing frankness. Sir Ralph looked worried, and Mistress Beatrix looked surprised.

"It seems a very simple trick," she murmured, "to bundle up a few blankets into lifelike effigies, and then to slip away while the jailer is elsewhere spending a social evening."

Kingswell flushed hotly, and looked at the girl steadily; but he failed to meet her eyes.

"Yes," he said, "they slipped away while two men were on guard along the walls, and while the self-appointed jailer, who has not had four hours' sleep in any night in the past three weeks, was playing chess with your ladyship."

"I am sure it is no loss to us," interposed the baronet quickly. "We have no use for the savage; and as to D'Antons — why, if the enemy kill him, it will save some one else the trouble. But I cannot help wondering at him taking so dangerous a risk. If he had been on friendly terms with the natives at any time, one would have a clue. But he always treated them like dogs."

Kingswell turned a casual shoulder toward the lady, and gave all his attention to the baronet and the affair of the Frenchman. The blush of shame had gone, leaving his face unusually pale. His

eyes, also, showed a change — a chilling from blue to gray, with a surface glitter and a shadow behind.

"You may be sure," he replied to Sir Ralph, "that D'Antons has taken what he considers the lesser risk. I'll wager he has won the savage to him, hand and heart. I was a fool not to have removed Red Cloud to one of the other huts."

"He was kept to D'Antons' cabin by my orders," said the baronet.

"I had forgotten that," replied Kingswell. "Then I am not the only scapegrace of the community."

The baronet's face lighted whimsically, and he smiled at the young man. But the girl did not receive the implication in the same spirit. She stared at the speaker as if he were some surprising species of bird that had flown in at the window.

"Such a remark rings dangerously of insubordination," she exclaimed, "not to mention the impertinence of it."

Sir Ralph looked at her, completely puzzled, and murmured a remonstrance. It is a wise father that knows his own daughter. Kingswell turned an expressionless face toward the fire for a moment. Then he bowed to Sir Ralph. "If I am guilty of impertinence, sir, I humbly crave your pardon," he said. "As to insubordination — why, I believe

there is nothing to say on that head, as I am a free agent; but I think you understand, sir, that I and my men are entirely at your service, as we have been ever since the day we first accepted the hospitality of Fort Beatrix. My men, at least, have not failed in any duty, whatever my delinquencies."

With an exclamation of sincere concern, the baronet stepped close to his friend and placed a hand on either of his shoulders.

"Bernard — my dear lad — why all this talk of pardon, and duty, and delinquencies, and God knows what else? If you believe that I consider you guilty of any carelessness, you must think me ungrateful indeed."

His voice, his look, his gesture, all convinced Kingswell that the words were sincere, and so did something toward the mending of his injured feelings. To the baronet, his eyes brightened and his manner unbent. He took his departure immediately after.

Sir Ralph turned to his daughter as the door closed behind Kingswell.

"I do not understand your treatment of him," he said. "Surely you realize that he is a friend — and friends are not so common that we can afford to flout them at every turn." He did not

speak angrily, but the girl saw plainly enough that he was seriously displeased.

"The boy is so insufferably self-satisfied," she explained, weakly. "How indignation would have burned within him had some one else allowed the prisoners to escape."

The baronet gazed at her pensively for several seconds, and then took her hand tenderly between his own.

"You do the brave lad an injustice, my sweeting," he said. "What you take for conceit is just youth, and strength, and fearlessness, and a clean conscience. He has nothing of the braggart in him — not a hint of it. I am sorry you like him so little, my daughter, for he is a good lad and well-disposed toward us."

CHAPTER XX.

BY ADVICE OF BLACK FEATHER

For a time after D'Antons' departure into the unknown, the little garrison of Fort Beatrix turned day into night. Not a man indulged in so much as a wink of sleep between the hours of dusk and dawn; but from sunrise until afternoon the place was as if it lay under an enchantment of slumber. On the sixth day after the flight of the Frenchman and Red Cloud, Ouenwa approached Kingswell with a request to be allowed to leave the fort, in company with Black Feather. He told how Black Feather was of the opinion that many of the tribesmen were against the leadership of Panounia, and that, if they could be found, it would be an easy matter for Ouenwa to win their support. He, Ouenwa, was of the blood of the greatest chief they had ever known. They would gather to the totem of the Bear. Assured of the friendship of the English people, they could be brought to the rescue of

the settlement. So Black Feather had told the tale to Ouenwa, and so Ouenwa believed.

"And you would have to go with Black Feather?" inquired Kingswell, none too cheerfully; for he looked upon the lad as a very dear younger brother.

"Truly, my friend-chief, for I am the grandson of Soft Hand," replied the boy. "When they see me, their blood will rise at the memory of Soft Hand's murder. I will talk great words of my love for the English, and of my hatred for Panounia, and of the great trading that will be done at the fort when the night-howlers have been driven away. Thus we shall all be saved — thus Mistress Beatrix shall escape capture."

At that Kingswell started and eyed his companion keenly. "You think Panounia can break into the fort?" he inquired.

Ouenwa smiled. "Hunger can do it before the snow melts," he replied, "and hunger will fight for Panounia and the black captain."

"What do you know of the black captain?"

"He is with the night-howlers. He will keep their courage warm. He will struggle many times to bring us to our deaths and to capture the lady. That is all I know."

"But how do you know so much, lad?" asked Kingswell.

Ouenwa looked surprised. "How could I know less, who dwelt within eyeshot of the black captain for so many days, and who have learned the ways of such wolves?" he asked, in his turn. "You know it already without my telling, friend-chief," he added.

"Let us to Sir Ralph for his advice," said the other.

Master Kingswell had not crossed the threshold of the baronet's cabin since the time of his rebuff at the hands of Mistress Beatrix. Of course he had seen the baronet frequently, and they had smoked some pipes of tobacco together by the hearth of the departed Frenchman; but from the presence of the lady he had kept off as from a lazaretto. At the voice of duty, however, he sought the baronet in his own house with excellent composure. Anger at the knowledge that a girl could hurt him so nerved him to accept the risk of again seeing the displeasure in her dark eyes.

Mistress Beatrix was not in the living-room when they entered. Sir Ralph welcomed them cordially. Upon hearing Ouenwa's and Black Feather's plan for winning some of the tribesmen to the succour of the fort, he was deeply moved. He took a ring

from his own hand and slipped it over one of Ouenwa's fingers. He gave the lad a fine hunting-knife for Black Feather, and a Spanish dagger for himself. He told Kingswell to supply them unstintingly from the store, with provisions and clothing for themselves and gifts for the natives whom they hoped to win.

"'Tis a chance," said he to Kingswell. "A chance of our salvation, and the only one, as far as I can see."

At that moment Mistress Beatrix entered the room. At sight of the visitors by the chimney, she swept a grand curtsey. The visitors bowed low in return. Her father advanced and led her, with the manner of those days, to his own chair beside the hearth. He told her, in a few words, of the venture upon which Ouenwa and Black Feather intended to set forth. The thought of it stirred the girl, and she looked on Ouenwa with shining eyes.

"'Tis a deed for the great knights of old," she said. "Lad, where have you learned your bravery?"

Unabashed, Ouenwa stood erect before her. "Half of it is the blood of my fathers," he replied, "and half is the teaching of Master Kingswell — and half I gather from your eyes."

The girl flushed with suppressed merriment. The baronet concealed his lips with his hand. Kingswell clutched his outspoken friend by the shoulder.

"Brother, you have named one-half too many," he said, laughing, "so your reason will carry more weight if you leave out that in which you mention my teaching. But come, we must find Black Feather, and make arrangements to leave as soon as dusk falls."

At that Beatrix tightened her hands on the arms of the chair and turned a startled face toward the speaker. "Surely, sir, you do not mean to leave us, too!" she exclaimed.

Neither the baronet nor Kingswell were looking at her; but Ouenwa saw the expression of eyes and lips. Kingswell, however, did not miss the note of anxiety in the clear young voice.

"I do not go with them, mistress," he said, "because my company would only delay their movements. And perhaps even spoil their plans. I am a poor woodsman — and already our garrison is none too heavily manned."

"I am glad you are not going," replied the girl, quietly. "I am sure that my father looks upon you as his right hand, and that the men need you."

Sir Ralph looked at his daughter with ill-con-

cealed surprise. Kingswell, murmuring polite acknowledgment of her gracious words, strove to get a clearer view of her half-averted face. He failed. Ouenwa was the only one of the three who knew that the words were sincere; but he had the advantage of his superiors in having caught sight of the sudden fear in the lady's face.

Sir Ralph and Kingswell lowered the light packs over the stockade to Ouenwa and the big warrior. When the figures merged into the gloom, heading northward, the two commanders descended from the storehouse and entered the baronet's cabin. Beatrix was by the fire, radiant in fine apparel.

"I am in no mood for chess," said Sir Ralph. "The thought of those two brave fellows stealing through the dark and cold fidgets me beyond belief."

He began his quarter-deck pacing of the floor — up and down, up and down, with his head thrust forward and his hands gripped behind his back.

"The wind is rising," said the girl to Kingswell. "It will be bleak in the forest to-night — away from the fire."

She shivered, and held her jewelled hands to the blaze.

"It is blowing for a storm," replied the young man. "The sky was clouded over when they left. 'Tis safer for them so. The snow will cover their

trail and, very likely, will keep the enemy from prowling abroad for a good many hours to come."

Mistress Beatrix crossed the room to a cupboard in the wall, and from it produced a violin. Kingswell stood by the chimney, watching her. The baronet continued his nervous pacing of the floor. The girl touched the strings here and there with skilful fingers, resined the bow, and then returned to the hearth and stood with her eyes on the fire. Suddenly she looked up at Kingswell. Her eyes were as he had never seen them before. They were full of firelight and dream. They were brighter than jewels, and yet dark as the heart of a deep water.

"Please do not stand," she said, and her voice, though free from any suggestion of indifference, sounded as if her whole being were far from that simple room. Her gaze returned to the fire. Kingswell quietly reseated himself; and at that she nestled her chin to the glowing instrument and drew the bow lightly, lovingly, almost inquiringly, across the strings. A whisper of melody followed the touch and sang clearer and more human than any human voice, and melted into the firelight.

At the first strain of the music, the baronet sat down and reclined comfortably with his head against the back of his chair. For awhile he

watched his daughter intently; then he turned his eyes to the heart of the fire and journeyed far in a waking dream.

The girl played on and on, weaving enchantments of peace with the magic strings. Kingswell, leaning back with his face in the shadow, could not look away from her. The minutes drifted by unheeded behind the singing of the violin. The candles on the table flared at their sockets. The logs on the hearth broke, and the flames sprang to new life. Outside the wind raced and shouldered along the walls. And suddenly the player stilled her hand, and, without a word to either of the men, took up one of the guttering candles from the table and went quickly to her own chamber. She carried the fiddle with her against her young breast, and the bow like a wand in her hand.

Sir Ralph started and sat erect in his chair. Kingswell got to his feet with a sigh, and lifted his heavy cloak from the bench.

"I must go the rounds," he said. "Good night, sir."

With that he went out into the swirling eddies of the storm. The baronet sat still for another hour. The music had uncovered so many ghosts of joy and song, of love and hate and shame. It had rung upon past glories and called up more re-

cent dishonours. And still another matter occupied his mind, and was finally dismissed with a smile and a yawn. It was that Beatrix had indulged in one of her deliriums of music in young Kingswell's presence, and that she had never before played in any mood but the lightest in the hearing of a stranger.

Kingswell paced beside the sentry at the drifted gate; but he kept his thoughts to the picture of the girl, the glowing fiddle, and the music and firelight that had seemed to pulse and spread together about the long room. Again he saw the candle flames leap high and waver, as if lured from their tethers by the crying of the instrument. But clearest of all was the player's face. His heart was filled to suffocation at the memory of it. Had other men seen her so beautiful? Had other men heard her soul and her dear heart singing and crying from the strings of the violin?

CHAPTER XXI.

THE SEEKING OF THE TRIBESMEN

Ouenwa and Black Feather turned their faces from the little fort and the hostile camp beyond the white river, and set bravely forward into the darkness. Black Feather led the way, avoiding hummocks, bending and twisting through the coverts, crossing the open glades like a shadow — and all without any noise except the scarcely audible padding of his stringed shoes. Ouenwa trod close after. They had not gone far before the snow began to fall and puff around them in blinding clouds. The trees bent tensely under the lash of the wind. More than one frost-embrittled spire came crashing down. Still the warrior and the lad held on their journey, for they were both fresh and strong, and eager to widen the spaces of wilderness between themselves and the camp of Panounia.

Shortly before dawn they dug a trench in the snow on the leeward side of a thicket of low spruces, broke fir-branches for a bed, built a fire between

the walls of white, and cooked and ate a frugal repast, and then rolled themselves in their rugs of skin and fell asleep. They had no fear that any of Panounia's people would disturb their slumbers. They lay as motionless and unknowing as logs for several hours. Then Ouenwa turned over and yawned, and Black Feather sat up, wide-awake in an instant. The morning was bright and unclouded. The white sun was half-way up the blue shell of the eastern sky. All around the new snow lay in feathery depths. On the dark firs and spruces it clung in even masses, which showed that the wind had died down long before the flakes had ceased to fall. Ouenwa and his comrade ate frugally of cold meat and bread, swallowed some brandy and water, and resumed their journey.

Not until the afternoon of the third day following their departure from Fort Beatrix did the travellers sight the smoke of a fire. It was Black Feather, attaining the summit of a ridge a few paces ahead of Ouenwa, who caught the first sight of the thin, melting signal of human life. It wavered up from a wood in a valley a few hundred of yards in front. On their right hand lay the ice-edged gray waters of an arm of the sea. On their left stretched dark forest and empty barren to a

mountainous horizon. In front lay hope, and behind the spur of menace.

"Is there a village yonder?" asked Ouenwa.

Black Feather replied negatively.

"The stream is Little Thunder," he said, in his own language, "and there was no lodge there when last I saw it. We will approach under the shelter of those spruces in the hollow. It makes the journey a few paces longer, and perhaps the arrival twenty times safer."

Ouenwa nodded his sympathy with the caution expressed by his friend.

"But let us hurry," he said. "Remember that around the stockade the black captain is ever stirring the courage of the night-howlers."

At last, creeping on all fours, they peered from the screen of brush into a tiny clearing on the north bank of Little Thunder. The stream was not ten yards across at this point. On its white surface ran several trails of snow-shoes. The smoke which had attracted them to the place curled up from the apex of a large, bark-roofed wigwam. As the travellers watched, an old woman appeared in the doorway of the lodge. Ouenwa recognized her as a wise herb-doctor who had been a friend and adviser of Soft Hand. He whispered the information to Black Feather.

"Then we may show ourselves," said the other, "for if this woman was the great chief's friend you may be sure that death has only strengthened her loyalty. It is so with women — with the wise and the foolish alike. A man will stand close to his comrade in the days of his glory and in the press of battle; but it is the squaw who keeps the fallen shield freshly painted and the cause of the departed ever before the matters of the present day. A man must have the reward of his friend's praise and the joy of his companionship; but a woman makes a god of the departed spirit and looks for her reward beyond the red gates."

Ouenwa had nothing to say to his friend's sage reflections, for all he knew of women was that a radiant creature far back in Fort Beatrix had his heart in thrall. So he led the way from cover, and down the bank, in silence.

The old squaw in the doorway of the lodge caught sight of them immediately. She turned into the dark interior of the wigwam, but appeared before they were half-way across the frozen stream, with a bow in her hand and an arrow on the string. Black Feather and the lad raised their right hands, palms forward, above their heads, and continued to advance. The old hag lowered her weapon, but did not relax her attitude of vigilance. Close

to the rise of the bank the travellers paused, and the lad called out that he was Ouenwa, grandson of Soft Hand, and that his companion was Black Feather, the adopted son of Montaw, the arrow-maker. At that the guardian of the wigwam forsook her post and advanced to meet them.

The herb-doctor, who had been one of Soft Hand's advisers, was not attractive to the eye. She was bent hideously, though still of surprising bodily strength. Her head was uncovered, save for the matted locks of hair that clung about it and fell over her ears and neck like a wig of gray tree-moss. Her eyes were deep and black and fierce. One yellow fang stood like a sentinel in the cavity of her mouth. Her hands were claws. Her skin was no lighter in hue and no finer in texture than was the tanned leather of her high-legged moccasins. Her garments were unusually barbaric — lynx-skins shapelessly stitched together and hung about with belts and charms, and a great knife of flint nearly as long as a cutlass. Her corded, scraggy arms hung naked at her sides, as indifferent to the nip of the frost as to the regard of strange eyes.

"Child," she said, "I heard that you were killed — that Panounia's men had slain you and a party of English; but that I knew to be false, for I saw not your spirit with the spirits of your fathers.

So I believed that you had crossed the great salt water with the strangers."

Ouenwa told his story, to which the old woman listened with the keenest interest and many nods of the head.

"It is well," she said. "They are scattered now, some in hiding, some sullenly obedient to Panounia, and some in captivity. Your need will bring them together and awake their sleeping courage. I know of a full score of stout warriors who will draw no bow for Panounia, and who are all within a day's journey of this spot, but sadly scattered, — yea, scattered in every little hollow, like frightened hares."

"Do you live in this great lodge all by yourself?" inquired Black Feather.

"My sons are in the forest, seeing to their snares," replied the woman, eying the tall brave sharply, "but within are a sick woman and a small child who escaped, ten days ago, from one of Panounia's camps."

She stood aside and motioned them to enter the lodge. Ouenwa went ahead, with Black Feather close at his heels. Within, it took them several seconds to adjust their eyes to the gloom of smoke and shadow. Presently they made out a couch of fir-branches and skins beyond the fire, and on it

a woman, half-reclining, with her arm about a child. Both the woman and the child were gazing at the visitors. The child began to whimper.

Black Feather uttered a low cry, and sprang over the fire. He had found his squaw and one of his lost children.

The sickness of Black Feather's wife was nothing but the result of hardship and ill-treatment. Already, under the herb-doctor's care, she was greatly improved. The meeting with her warrior went far to complete the cure of the old woman's broths and soft furs. The child was well; but the woman knew nothing of the whereabouts of their elder offspring.

Ouenwa and Black Feather did not tarry long at the lodge beside Little Thunder. With the younger of their aged hostess's sons for guide, they set out that same day to find the hidden warriors who were against the leadership of Panounia.

CHAPTER XXII.

BRAVE DAYS FOR YOUNG HEARTS

BACK at Fort Beatrix the time passed in weary suspense. The wounded men recovered slowly. The enemy remained inactive beyond the river and the dark forest. Only the haze of their cooking-fires, melting against the sky, told of their presence. The inaction ate into the courage of the English men and women like rust. The boat-building and the iron-working at the forge were carried on listlessly, and without the old-time spurs of song and laughter. Even William Trigget and Tom Bent displayed sombre faces to their little world.

Bernard Kingswell, however, found life eventful. He was not blind to the danger of their position, and he continued to do double duty in everything; but for all that he awoke each day with keen anticipation for whatever might befall, and, sleeping, dreamed of other things than the poised menace and the monotony. Why should he regret Bristol, or any other city of the outer world, when Beatrix

Westleigh was domiciled within the rough walls of the fort on Gray Goose River? His heart would not descend to those depths of despondency in which lurk fear and hopeless anxiety. What power of man, in that wilderness, could break down his guard and harm the most wonderful being in the world? The girl's brief season of unkindness toward him was as a cloud that her later friendliness had dispersed as the sun disperses the morning fog. He had caught a glimpse of her heart in her music, in her eyes, in her voice, and on several occasions something that had set his heart thumping in the touch of her hand. At least she was neither averse nor indifferent to his society, and the glances of her magnificent eyes were open to translations that set him looking out upon life and that wilderness through a golden haze. Let a dozen black-visaged D'Antons draw their rapiers upon him — he would out-thrust, out-play, and out-stamp them all! Let a hundred fur-clad savages howl about the fort — he, Bernard Kingswell, with his lady's favour on his breast, would scatter them like straw! And all this because, for the first time in his life of twenty-one years, he was bitten with love for a woman, — and twenty-one was a fair, manly age in those days. He had won to it unknowingly, by the brave paths of adventure and the sea. So

let not even the oldest of us criticize his attitude toward life. A man's emotions cannot always be herded and driven by the outward circumstances of need and danger, like a flock of sheep at the mercy of a dog and a dull countryman. That to which cautious Worldliness has given the name of madness, from the earliest times, is nothing but a spark of God's own courage and imagination in the heart of youth: the years having not yet smothered it with the ashes of cowardice and calculation.

Bernard Kingswell had never displayed any but an assured front to the world. Now this love that had him so irresistibly in its services only heightened the confidence of his address toward men and events; but in the presence of its inspiration it clothed him in unaccustomed and unconscious meekness. You may be sure that Beatrix had been quick to notice the change. It pleased her mightily, of course; for was it not a greater and a more pleasant matter to have brought a high-hearted, adventure-bred youth like this to bondage and slavery than to have a dozen idle courtiers bowing before one, and a dozen sentimental poets mouthing verses that could, with equal sincerity, be applied to any charming lady? So Mistress Beatrix decided, and could not find it in her heart to regret the beaux

of London Town. But she did not know her heart as the man knew his — and as she knew his.

One morning they walked together along the river-bank, before the open gate of the fort. The air was clearer than any crystal. The shadows along the snow were bluer than the dome of the sky. The girl talked cheerily; for in the bright daytime, with the sounds of peaceful labour rising from the fort so close at hand, and with a strong and worshipping man, sword-girt, within arm's length, it was hard to remember the menace concealed by the southern woods. Her eyes were very bright, and the blood mantled under the clear skin of her cheeks at the wind's caress. Now and then, for a bar or two, she broke into song.

Their path was one that Kingswell had beaten firm with his snow-shoes, after the last storm, expressly as a promenade for Mistress Westleigh. It was about a hundred yards in length, and broad enough for two persons to walk in abreast, and firm enough to make the wearing of snow-shoes unnecessary. It ran north and south, parallel with the stockade and the course of the river at that point. When the turn was made at either end of the beat, Kingswell's glance searched the horizon and every tree, every knoll, and hollow. It was done almost unconsciously, as a traveller instinct-

ively loosens his sword in its sheath at the sound of voices ahead of him on a dark road.

After a time the girl noticed her companion's vigilance. "What do you expect to see?" she asked, touching his arm lightly and swiftly with her gloved hand. For a moment he was confused, but recovered his wits with an effort.

"Nothing," he replied, "or surely we would not be walking here."

She smiled at that. "Are you afraid?" she inquired.

He looked down at her, displayed the desperate condition of his heart in his eyes, and then looked back again to the strip of woods that approached them along the back.

"I am not afraid," he said — and then, with a gasp of dismay, he caught her and swung her behind him. She did not resist, but cowered against his sheltering back.

"We must return to the fort," he said. "Something is going on in that covert."

"Come! We will run!" she whispered, pulling at his elbows to turn him around.

"No," he replied. "I shall walk backwards, and you must keep behind me, and guide me. It is no great matter to avoid an arrow, if one knows in what quarter to look for it."

She made no reply. They began the retreat along the narrow branch path that led to the gate of the fort, he stepping cautiously, heels first, and she pulling at his belt and gazing fearfully past his shoulder at the woods. They were within a few yards of the gate when he suddenly put his arms behind him, caught her close, and lurched to one side. The unexpected movement threw the girl to her knees in the deep snow beside the path. Her cry of dismay brought her father and two others from the fort. They found Kingswell staggering and confusedly apologizing to Beatrix for his roughness. In the thickness of his left shoulder stuck a war-arrow. Supporting Kingswell and fairly dragging the frightened girl, they rushed back to safety and closed and barred the gate.

Hour after hour passed without the hidden warriors of Panounia making any further signs of hostility, or even of their existence. The watchers on the stockade scanned the woods in vain for any movement. A shot was fired into the nearest cover from one of the cannon, but without apparent effect.

Kingswell was on duty again within an hour of the receiving of his wound. The ragged cut caused him a deal of pain; but the salve that really took the sting and ache out of it was the thought that he had been serving Beatrix as a shield when

the arrow struck him. He went the rounds of the stockades with a glowing heart and dauntless bearing, and his air of calm assurance put courage into the men. He saw to the strengthening of several points of the defence, cleared the loopholes of drifted snow, and gave out an extra supply of powder and ball.

It was dusk of that day before Kingswell again saw Mistress Westleigh. He was passing the baronet's cabin, and she opened the door and called to him shyly. He turned and stepped close to her, the better to see her face in the gathering twilight. She extended her hands to him, with a quick gesture of invitation. He dropped his heavy gloves on the snow before clasping them in eager fingers.

"But you must not stand here, without anything 'round your shoulders," he said; but, for all his solicitude, he maintained his firm hold of her hands. She laughed, very softly, and a slight pressure of her fingers drove his anxiety to the winds. He would have nothing of evil befall her, God knows! — nay, not so much as a chill — but how could he keep it in his mind that she wore no cloak when his whole being was a-thrill with love and worship? So he stood there, speechless, gazing into her flushed face. Presently her eyes lowered before his ardent regard.

"I called to you to thank you for saving my life," she murmured. He had nothing to say to that. Perhaps he had saved her life — and again, perhaps he had not. At that moment he was the last person in the world to decide the question. His heart and mind were altogether with the immediate present. He realized that her hands were strong and yet tender to the touch of his. The faint fragrance of her hair was in his brain like some divine vintage. The sweet curves of cheek and lips — how near they were! She had called to him with more than kindness in her voice. God had made a high heaven of this fort in the wilderness.

"You were very brave," she said, leaning nearer ever so slightly. Sweet madness completely overthrew the lad's native caution, and he was about to catch her to him bodily, when she slipped nimbly into the cabin, and left him standing with arms extended in silent invitation toward the figure of the imperturbed Sir Ralph.

"Well, my lad?" inquired the baronet, calmly.

"Good evening to you, Sir Ralph," replied Kingswell, hiding his chagrin and confusion with exceeding skill.

"You looked just now as if you were expecting me," said the elder. "Come in, come in. We can talk better by the fire."

Kingswell's blushes were safe in the dusk. He picked up his gloves from the trampled snow by the threshold, and silently followed the baronet into the fire-lit living-room. Beatrix was not there — which fact the lover noticed with a sinking of the heart. He was alone with her father, and evidently under marked suspicion, — a fearful matter to a young man who aspires to the hand of an angel, and has not yet his line of action quite laid down. He took a deep breath, trembled at thought of his presumption, called the respectability of his parents and his income to his aid, and was ready for the baronet when that gentleman turned and faced him in front of the fire.

"I love your daughter," he said, with his voice not quite so cool and manly as he had intended it to be.

Sir Ralph bowed, but said nothing. His back was to the fire, and so his face was in heavy shadow.

"I love her very dearly," continued the other. "I believe no man could love a woman more, for it is with my whole heart, and with every fibre of my being. I know, sir, that my rank is not exalted, and that she is the — "

The baronet raised his hand sharply.

The gesture silenced Kingswell in the middle of

his sentence more effectively than a clap of thunder would have done it.

"Yes," said Sir Ralph, harshly, "she is the daughter of a blackleg. She is the daughter of a criminal exile. She is the daughter of a broken gamester. Ay, Bernard, you do indeed look high, — you, the son of a humble merchant of Bristol."

Kingswell was dismayed for the moment. Then, with a hardy oath, he slapped his hand to his hip.

"Though she were the daughter of the devil himself," he began, and came to a lame stop. The baronet's smile passed unseen. It was a kindly smile, and yet a bitter one by the same tokens. Kingswell gave up all attempt at politic speech. He had his own feelings to express. "Your daughter, sir, is the best and the loveliest," he said, huskily. "Whatever your backslidings and misfortunes have been, they can reflect in no way on her sweetness, and wisdom, and virtue. But, sir, I do not mean to sit in judgment on any man, and last of all on the father of the most glorious woman in the world. I remember you in your strength, — the greatest man in the county and my father's noble friend. The world has taken a twirl since then, but you may be sure that, whatever betide, my heart is with you warmer than my worthy father's ever was."

CHAPTER XXIII.

BETROTHED

THAT Bernard Kingswell had accepted the baronet's own estimation of his (the baronet's) character so frankly, in the heat of sentimental disclosure, did not trouble Sir Ralph by more than a pang or two. What else could he expect of even this true friend? He was a broken gamester and a criminal exile by all the signs and by the verdict of the law; but whether or not he was a blackleg was a matter of opinion and the exact definition of that word. He knew that Kingswell was well disposed toward him, and that he believed nothing vile or cowardly of him; but, best of all, he was sure that, in Kingswell's love, his daughter was fortunate beyond his hoping of the past two years. Should they get clear of the besieging natives and out of the wilderness, her future happiness, safety, and position would be assured. As Mistress Bernard Kingswell, she would live close to the colour and finer things of life again, gracing some fair

house as a former Beatrix had done in other days — to wit, the great houses of Beverly and Randon. The mist blurred his eyes at that memory and dimmed his vision against the rough log walls around him.

Another thought came to the broken baronet, as he sat alone by the falling fire, after Kingswell's departure, and awaited his supper and the reappearance of his daughter. The thought was like a black shadow between his face and the comforting fir sticks — between his heart and the knowledge of a good man's love and protection for Beatrix. Knowing the girl as he did, he felt sure that she would never leave him, her exiled father, even at the call of a more compelling love; and, as a return to his own country meant prison or death to him, she would hold to the wilderness, thereby leaving the new-found happiness untouched. On the other hand, should death come to him soon, and in the wilderness, — by the arrows of the enemy, for choice, — his daughter's fetters would be filed for ever. He sank his face between his hands. The desire to live out one's time clings about a man's vitals against all reason. Even an exiled and broken gamester, stockaded in a nameless wilderness and hemmed in by savages, finds a certain zest in day and night and the winds of heaven.

With nothing to live for — even with the scales decidedly the other way — Death still presents an uninviting face. It may be the inscrutable mask of him that fills with distrust the heart of the man who contemplates the Long Journey. In that inevitable yet mysterious figure, showing as no more than a shadow between the bed and the window, it is hard for the sinful mortal, no matter how repentant, to read clear the promise of eternal peace. What dark deed might not be perpetrated by the shrouded messenger between the death-bed and Paradise?

Sir Ralph bowed his head between his palms, and hid the commonplace, beautiful radiance of the hearth-fire from his eyes; and so, while he waited for his supper of stewed venison, he reasoned and planned for his daughter's future to the bitter end, seeing clearly that, should the chances of battle turn in favour of the little plantation, he must readjust his sentiments toward death. A man of lower breeding and commoner courage would have groaned in the travail of that thought, and cursed the alternative; but the baronet sat in silence until he heard his daughter at the door, and then stood up and hummed softly the opening bars of a Somerset hunting-song.

Beatrix tripped close to her father and raised her

face to him. He bent and kissed her tenderly. For a little while they stood without speaking, hand in hand, on the great caribou skin before the hearth. Suddenly the girl pressed her cheek against his shoulder.

"What was it," she whispered, breathlessly, — "the matter that held you and Bernard in such serious converse?"

"And has your heart given you no hint of it?" he laughed.

"And why, dear father? What has my heart to do with your talk of guards and ammunition and supplies, — save that it is with you in everything?"

The baronet released her hand and, instead, placed his arm about her slender and rounded waist. "It is a story that I cannot tell you, sweet, — I, who am your father," he said. "But I think that you shall not have to wait long for the telling of it, for both youth and love are impatient. And here comes the good Maggie with the candles."

During the meal the baronet was more lively and entertaining than Beatrix had seen him for years, and Beatrix, in her turn, was unusually untalkative and preoccupied. The girl wanted to give her undivided attention to the quiet voice of her heart. The man was equally anxious to avoid in-

trospection as she to court it. But he, for all his laughter and gay stories of gay times spent, displayed a colourless face and haunted eyes behind the candle-light; while she, sitting in silence, glowed like a rare flower. Her dark, massed tresses, her eyes of unnamable colour, her throat and lips and brow, were all radiant with the magic fire at her heart.

Sir Ralph, after bringing a disjointed tale to a vague ending, sipped his wine, put down the glass clumsily, and suddenly turned away from the table. The bitterness of his lot had caught him by the throat. But she noticed nothing of his change of manner; and presently they left the table and moved to the fire. He busied himself with heaping faggots across the dogs. Then she filled his tobacco-pipe for him, and lit it with a coal from the hearth, puffing daintily. He had just got it in his hand when a knocking sounded on the door, and Maggie Stone opened to Kingswell.

Upon Kingswell's entrance, Sir Ralph, after greeting him cordially but quietly, donned his cloak and hat, and begged to be excused for a few minutes. "I have a word for Trigget," he said. Then he pulled on his gloves, pushed open the door, and stepped out to the dark.

Two candles burned on the table. Maggie Stone

snuffed them, surveyed the room and its inmates with a comprehensive glance, and at last forced her unwilling feet kitchenward again. Her heart was as sentimental as heroic, was Maggie Stone's, and her nature was of an inquisitive turn. She sighed plaintively as she left the presence of the young couple.

The door leading to the kitchen had no more than closed behind the servant than Bernard, without preliminaries, dropped on one knee before the lady of his adoration, and lifted both her hands to his lips. She did not move, but stood between the candles and the firelight, all a-gleam in her beauty and her fine raiment, and gazed down at the golden head. Her lips smiled, but her eyes were grave.

"Dear heart," murmured the lad, without lifting his face or altering his position, — "dear heart, can it be true?"

She bent her head a little lower. Her heart seemed as if it was about to break away from its bonds in her side. She could not speak; but, almost unconsciously, she closed her fingers upon his.

"Tell me," he cried. And again, with a note of fear in his voice: "Tell me if I may win you! Tell me if your heart has any promise?"

Before she could control her agitation suffi-

ciently to answer him, the outer door of the cabin was swung open without ceremony, and Sir Ralph stamped in. He caught Kingswell by the wrist and wrenched it sharply.

"We are attacked," he cried. "They have piled heaps of dry brush along the palisades — and they have set the stuff on fire! It burns like mad. Lord, but it looks more like hell than ever!"

Even as he spoke, the fragrant, biting odour of the smoke from the burning evergreen-needles invaded the room. Kingswell got quickly to his feet, still holding the girl's hands. He did not look at the baronet. For a second he paused and peered, questioning, into her wonderful eyes.

"Oh, I love you, dear heart," she cried, faintly. "I love you, Bernard."

He stooped quickly (and how eagerly every lover knows), and even while the first brief and tremulous kiss was sweet on their lips, the muskets clapped deafeningly, savage shouts rang high, and the baronet thrust sword and hat into Bernard's hands.

"Come! For God's grace, lad, come and rally the men!" he shouted.

Then the lover turned from his mistress and saw the shrewd work that awaited him. He ran to it with a leaping heart.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A FIRE-LIT BATTLE. OUENWA'S RETURN

THE heaps of brush outside the palisades burned with a long-drawn roaring, like the note of a steady wind. It was a terrifying sound. The glare of the conflagration lit the interior of the fort, staining the trampled snow of the yard to an awful hue, staining the faces of the desperate settlers as if with foreshadowing of blood, and painting the walls of the cabins as if for a carnival. The platform upon which the guns stood was a mass of flame before any use could be made of the pieces. The breastwork of faggots burned with leapings and roarings, flinging orange and crimson showers to the black dome above. The savages skirmished behind the girdle of flames, like imps along the blood-coloured snow. The settlers discharged their muskets through the singed loopholes, firing low, and taking the chances with heroic fortitude. Sir Ralph and Bernard Kingswell were here and there, with their swords in their hands and encourage-

ment in speech and bearing. Both knew that this engagement would be a fight to the finish; and both felt reasonably sure that a shrewder and braver commander than Panounia was against them.

The ammunition was carried from the storehouse to the shed over the well, for the fire was already crackling against the log walls of the buildings. Suddenly a sharp report and a high shower of sparks and burning fragments broke from the gun-platform; and, for the moment, the warriors were scattered from that side. One of the cannon had exploded. That corner of the stockade immediately fell and settled to the snow. Next instant the second gun was fired by the flames. It sent its whole charge into the uncertain Beothics, scattering them to cover in yelling disorder. At that the Englishmen cheered, and set about fighting back the encroaching flames.

Inspiration, or a font of courage to be drawn upon at need, must have dwelt behind the shelter of the spruces; for within a very few minutes of the retreat, all the warriors, save the wounded, were about the fort again. Kingswell took note of it, and suspected the inspiration to be nothing else than Pierre d'Antons' insinuating presence and dazzling smile. A spur, too, he suspected — the spur of the mongrel Frenchman's evil sneer and black

temper. He knew enough of the aboriginal character to feel that it would prove but a plaything for such a personality as the buccaneer's. He looked across the glowing, smoking breach in the fortifications with hard eyes. He voiced his desire to have the fellow by the throat, or at the point of his sword, in tones that rang like a curse.

Suddenly Kingswell left his post and ran to the well-house.

He knew where the *Pelican's* powder lay among the stores, done up in five canvas bags of about twelve pounds each. With two of these under his cloak, he returned to his place a few paces from the subsiding red barrier that still held the enemy from the interior of the fort. By this time the back of Trigget's cabin was smouldering. The roofs of the cabins, deep with snow, were safe; but the rear walls were all in a fair way of being ignited by the crackling brushwood, which the warriors of Panounia diligently piled against them.

Kingswell left the protection of the rest of the square to Sir Ralph, William Trigget, and all the men of the garrison save Tom Bent. The old boatswain was, by this time, a very active convalescent. Kingswell whispered a word or two in his ear. They kept a sharp lookout across the wreckage of the fallen corner of the stockade.

They saw a party of the enemy gather ominously close to the glowing edge of the breach. Kingswell passed one of the bags of powder to his companion. "When I give the word," he said.

Suddenly the black knot of warriors dashed into the obstruction, brandishing spears and clubs, and screaming like maniacs. Kingswell uttered a low, quick cry, tossed his bag of powder into the glowing coals under the feet of the enemy, and ran for the shelter of the well-house at top speed. Tom Bent followed his movements on the instant. Together they reached the narrow shelter; and, before they could turn about, the air shook and reeled, as if a bolt of wind had broken upon them, a blinding flash seemed to consume the whole night, and a puffing, thumping report stunned their ears. They stumbled against the sides of the shed, clawed desperately, and fell to the ground.

When Bernard Kingswell and the trusty boatswain regained their senses (which had left them for only a few seconds), they crawled from the well-house and stared about them. The square was not so bright as it had been, and, save for a few huddled shapes on the snow, was empty. By the shouting and mixed tumult, they knew that the fighting was now farther away — that the settlers had sallied forth on the offensive. They could not

understand such recklessness; but they decided, without hesitation, to take the risk. They ran to the now black gap in the palisades. Fire, coals, wreckage, and even the snow had been hurled and blown broadcast. They crossed the torn ground and headed for the tumult in the fitfully illuminated spaces beyond. Native war-whoops and English shouts mixed and clashed in the frosty air. On the very edge of the shifting conflict, the old sailor clutched his master's arm. "Hark!" he cried. "D'ye hear that now? It be the yell o' that young Ouenwa, sir, or ye can call me a Dutcher!"

At the same moment, before Kingswell could reply to Bent's statement, a club, thrown by a retreating warrior, caught the gentleman on the side of the head and felled him like a thing of wood. He moaned, as he toppled over. Then he lay still on the ruddy snow.

Beatrix had a dozen candles alight in the living-room of the baronet's cabin. Word had reached her that Ouenwa and Black Feather had arrived in time to take advantage of the rebuff dealt the enemy by the explosions of the bags of powder. When victory had seemed to be hopelessly in the hands of the determined savages, Ouenwa and his follow-

ers, though spent from their journey, had made a timely and successful rear attack.

The girl was radiant. She moved up and down the room, eagerly awaiting the return of Bernard Kingswell. She questioned herself as to that, and laughed joyously. Yes, it was Bernard, beyond peradventure, whom heart, hands, and lips longed to recover and reward. A month ago, a week ago, it would have been her father — even a night ago he would have shared, equally with the lover, in her sweet and eager concern. But now she sped from hearth to door, and peered out into the blackness, with no thought of any of those brave fellows save the lad of Bristol.

The burning brush had all been trampled out, and the fires in the walls and stockade had been quenched with water. The little square was dark, save for the subdued fingers of light from windows and doors. Beatrix peered from the open door, regardless of the cold. She was outlined black against the warm radiance inside the room. Her silken garments clung about her, pressed gently by a breath of wind. She rested a hand on either upright of the doorway, and leaned forward as if, at a whim, she would fly out from the threshold. Presently shadowy figures took shape in the gloom, and she heard her father's voice, and William Trig-

get's, and the high pipe of Ouenwa. But she caught no sound of Bernard Kingswell's clear tones. A sudden fear caught her, and she stepped out upon the trampled snow and called to Sir Ralph. In a moment he was at her side, and had an arm about her.

"Sweeting," he said, "you must stay within for a little. The night is bitterly cold, and —"

"But where is Bernard?" she whispered, staring past him.

"He is with the others," replied the baronet, — "with Ouenwa and his brave fellows, and the dauntless Trigget."

He spoke quickly and uneasily, and led her back to the cabin at the same time. He closed the door, and laid a wet sword across a stool.

"What is it?" she cried, facing him, with wide eyes and bloodless cheeks. "Tell me! Tell me!"

"The lad is hurt," admitted Sir Ralph.

"Hurt?" repeated the girl, vaguely. "Hurt? How should he be hurt?"

She shivered, and gripped her hand desperately. Could it be that the High God had been deaf to her prayers?

Sir Ralph's face went as pale as hers; for all he knew of Kingswell's condition was that he still breathed, and that his hat had saved his head from

being cut. Whether the skull was broken or not, he did not know. He braced himself, and smiled.

"My dear," he said, "he is not seriously hurt, so do not stand like that — for God's sake!"

At the last words his voice lost its note of composure, and broke shrilly. He caught her to him. "Rip me," he cried, "but if you act so when he is simply knocked over, what will you do if he ever gets a real wound!"

The girl was comforted. Tears sprang to her eyes, and the blood returned to her cheeks. She clung to the baronet and sobbed against his shoulder. Presently she looked up.

"Take me to him," she begged, "or bring him here."

"So you love this Bernard Kingswell?" inquired her father, looking steadily into her face.

Her gleaming eyes did not waver from his gaze. "Yes," she replied, quietly.

The man turned away, took his blood-wet sword from the stool, eyed it dully, and leaned it against the wall. He was trying to imagine what the lad's death would mean to his daughter's future; but he could only see that it would mean a few more years for himself. He started guiltily, and returned to his daughter. His face was desperately grim.

"Wait for me," he said. "I'll see how the lad is doing now; and shall return immediately."

Sir Ralph crossed to the cottage that had been built for D'Antons, and which had passed on to Kingswell. He opened the door softly and stepped within. He found the wounded gentleman lying prone on his couch, half-undressed, and with bandaged head. Ouenwa, gaunt and blood-stained, was beside the still figure.

"He opened his eyes," whispered the boy; "but see, he has closed them again. His spirit waits at the spreading of the trails."

Sir Ralph bent down and examined the linen dressings on Kingswell's head. They were exceedingly well arranged. He saw that the hair had been cut away from the place of the wound.

"Your work, Ouenwa?" he inquired.

The boy nodded. The baronet felt his friend's pulse.

"It beats strong," he said. "The heart seems sure enough of the path to take."

Ouenwa's face lighted quickly. "He has chosen," he said, gravely. "He has seen the hunting-grounds shining beyond the west, but the beauty of them has not lured him along that trail."

The baronet smiled quickly into the Beothic's eyes. "You are a brave lad, and we are deep

in debt to you," he exclaimed. "Your bravery and wit have saved the fort and all our lives. Watch your friend a few minutes longer; I but go to bring another nurse to help you. Then you may sleep."

CHAPTER XXV.

FATE DEALS CARDS OF BOTH COLOURS IN THE LITTLE FORT

From that brisk fight, in which Ouenwa and his twenty braves and the little garrison of Fort Beatrix defeated Panounia, Black Feather brought a confirmation of Pierre d'Antons' concern in the last attacks upon the settlement. It consisted of a sword-belt and an empty scabbard. He had torn them from the person of a tall antagonist during a brief hand-to-hand encounter. The owner of the gear had won free, Black Feather regretted to say. Sir Ralph, too, felt the escape of his enemy, and sincerely hoped that the defeat had ended his power over Panounia, and brought down that wolfish chief's hatred instead.

On the morning after the battle, the little plantation presented a busy though sombre appearance to those of its people who were in condition to view it. Along the woods and rising ground to the north, the snow and frozen soil were being hollowed

to receive the bodies of those slain in the fight. The dead of the enemy had been carried far into the woods, and piled together with scant ceremony. The settlers had lost three of their number, — young Donnelly, Harding, and the younger Trigget. Four of the rescuing party were dead and wounded. Tom Bent was on his back again, and Kingswell's head was ringing like a sea-shell. William Trigget was cut about the face and sore all over; but he kept on his feet.

After the graves were chipped in the iron earth, and the shrouded bodies lowered therein and covered, the tribesmen, under Black Feather's orders, set about building themselves lodges outside the stockade. It had been decided that, for mutual support, the friendly Beothics should camp near the fort, at least for the remainder of the winter. With axes borrowed from the settlement, they soon had the forest ringing with the noise of their labour. Though they had travelled light, in their hurry to rescue the friends of Ouenwa and Black Feather, they had dragged along with them a few sled-loads of deerskins and birch bark, with which to cover their wigwams. So the shelters sprang up quickly about the torn and scorched palisades; for it was a small matter to trim the poles and fit the pliable roofs across the conical frames.

The dusk gathered over the wilderness, dimming the edges of white barren and black forest and round hill. The stars shone silver above, and the fires of the victorious men of the totem of the Bear glowed red below. In the outer room of the cabin that had been Pierre d'Antons', Beatrix sat alone by Kingswell's bed. Her eyes were on the leaping flames in the chimney, and his were on the fair lines of her averted face. The top of his head was so swathed in bandages that he looked like a turbaned Turk. Cheeks and chin were white as paper in the unstable light. His eyes were bright with a touch of fever brought on by his suffering. His mind was in a fitful mood, for a minute or two steady enough and concerned with the present and the room in which he lay, and then wandering abroad, exploring vague trails of remembrance and imagining. Sometimes he murmured words and sentences, but in such a gabbling style that his nurse could have made nothing of what was passing in his brain even if she had taken such advantage of his condition as to try.

After a long spell of uneasy mutterings, followed by a profound silence, he suddenly flung out one arm. The movement startled Beatrix from her dreaming, and she turned her face back to him from the fire.

"Twenty days without water," he whispered, distinctly. "Twenty days — and that beast Trowley is laughing to see my tongue between my teeth like a squeezed rag."

The girl caught up a mug of water and held it to his lips. He drank greedily, and then took hold of her hand. His head was against the hollow of her arm; for, to give him the drink, she had knelt beside his low bed.

"Beatrix," he said, gravely, "let us pretend that you love me."

She was strangely moved at that, and bent closer to see his eyes.

"Why pretend, dear heart?" she answered. "I do love you, as you very well know. Sleep again, Bernard, with your head so — pressed close."

"I feel your heart," he said, simply as a child. The fever was as a fine haze across the mirror of his brain.

"It beats only for you," she murmured, pressing her lips to his cheek. The lad's eyes shone with a clearer light at that.

"Tell me that this is no vision of fever," he said. "Tell me, or strength will bring nothing but sorrow. Better death than to find your kisses a trick of dreaming."

"Is it not a pleasant dream?" she asked, softly, smiling a little.

"Ay; to dream so, a man would gladly have done with waking," he replied. "If it were not in life that Beatrix were mine, then would I follow the vision through eternal sleep — as God is my judge."

"Hush, dear lad," she murmured, "for the heart and the body of Beatrix are of right Somersetshire stuff, to fade not at any whim of fever — and the love she gives you will outlast life — as God is our judge and love His handiwork." And she kissed him again, blushing sweetly at her daring. And so they remained, she kneeling beside the couch, and he with his bandaged head against her lovely shoulder, until Sir Ralph entered the cabin, fumbling discreetly at the latch.

The days passed slowly in the heart of that frozen wilderness between the white river and the long graves. Stockade and wall were repaired. Fresh meat was trapped and shot in sheltered valley and rough wood. The forge rang again with the clanging of sledges, and the tracts of timber with the swinging axes. Hope reawoke in hearts long dismayed, and blood ran more redly to the stir of work and freedom. Master Kingswell gained fresh strength with the rounding of every day, and

Mistress Westleigh recovered all her glory of eyes and lips and hair. Ouenwa, honoured by all, carried himself like a gentleman and a warrior. Black Feather, with his wife and his surviving child in a snug lodge, felt again the zest and peace of living. Only Sir Ralph seemed to find no ray of comfort in the days of security. He brooded alone, avoiding even his daughter. His face grew thinner, and his shoulders lost something of their youthful vigour. The desolation and bitterness had, at last, dimmed his courage and his philosophy. The very relief at Panounia's defeat and D'Antons' supposed overthrow had, somehow, weakened his gallant endurance. He counted it a grievance that God had not led him to his death in the last fight, as he had prayed so earnestly. He had been eager then. Now he must plan it over again — over and over — in cold reasoning and cold blood, and alone by the fire. A foolish, causeless anger got hold upon him at times; and again he would be all repentance, telling his heart that, no matter how bitter his fate, it was fully deserved. And so, day by day, the shadows grew behind his brain, and a little seed of madness germinated and took root.

For a time Beatrix did not notice the change in her father's manner and habits. The thing disclosed itself so gradually, and she was so intent

upon the nursing of her lover; and yet again, the baronet had been variable in his moods, to a certain extent, ever since the beginning of his troubles — years enough ago. It was Ouenwa who first saw that something had gone radically wrong in the broken gentleman's mind, and his knowledge had come about in this wise.

The young Beothic, though an ardent sportsman and warrior, was a still more ardent seeker after bookish wisdom. Kingswell, before his hurt, had taught him something of the art of reading. Later, Mistress Westleigh had carried it further. By the time that Kingswell was safely on the road to his old health and a mended head, Ouenwa could spell out a page of English print very creditably. His primer was one of those volumes of Master Will Shakespeare's plays, which the Frenchman had left behind him. One day Beatrix entered the cabin to take her turn at tending the invalid, and found Ouenwa with the drama in his hands, and his youthful brow painfully furrowed with thought. She took the book from him and fluttered the pages, pausing here and there to read a line or two.

"Run away," said she, "and on a shelf beside our chimney you will find a book with easier words than this contains. There is matter here, I think, that is beyond a beginner."

At that Kingswell raised himself to his elbow and nodded his sore head eagerly.

"Ay, lad, run and find yourself an easier book," he said.

Nothing loath, for his quest of learning was sincere,—as was everything about him,—Ouenwa left the presence of the lovers and ran across the snow to Sir Ralph's cabin. He told his errand to the baronet. That gentleman looked at him long and keenly, so that the boy trembled and wished himself out of the house. Then, with a sudden start and a harsh laugh, "Help yourself, lad," said Sir Ralph. Ouenwa found the shelf of books, and, kneeling before it, was soon busy looking over the divers volumes and broad-sheets with which it was piled high. He found a rhymed and pictured chap-book greatly to his liking. He was spelling out the first verses when a movement behind his back brought him to a sense of his whereabouts. He turned quickly. There stood the baronet, with a walking-cane in his hand, making lunge and thrust at a spot of resin on the log wall. The poor gentleman stamped and straddled, pinked the unseen swordsman, and parried the unseen blade, with a dashing air. There was a light in his eyes and a twist of the lips that struck Ouenwa's heart cold in his side. The light was that which, when seen

in the eyes of a man of a primitive people, divides that man from the laws and responsibilities that are the portion of his fellows. It was the gleam of idiocy — that sinister sheen that cuts a man from his birthright.

The boy knelt there, motionless with fear, with his face turned over his shoulder. He watched every movement of the fantastic exhibition with fascinated eyes. He fairly held his breath, so terrible was the display in that quiet, dim-lit room. Suddenly the baronet lowered the point of the modish cane smartly to the floor, and turned upon the lad with a smile, an embarrassed flush on his thin cheeks, and sane eyes.

"'Tis a pretty art — this of the French rapier," he said, "and I make a point of keeping my wrist limber for it."

"Yes, sir," said Ouenwa.

Sir Ralph flung the walking-cane aside, and sat down despondently in the nearest chair. Ouenwa saw, at a glance, that his presence was already forgotten. With furtive movements and such haste as he could manage, he began replacing some of the books and selecting others to carry away with him.

"Sweeting," said the baronet, "a pipe of tobacco would rest me."

Ouenwa realized that the gentleman, in his strange mood, believed that Mistress Beatrix was in the room; but Ouenwa had tact enough not to point out the little mistake. He got up noiselessly and filled the bowl of a long pipe from a great jar on the chimney-piece. He took a splinter of wood from the basket by the hearth and lit it at the fire. Stepping softly to the baronet's side, he placed the pipe in his hand, and held the light to the tobacco while the baronet puffed reflectively and unseeingly. Then the lad gathered up his books and left the cabin. Fear of Sir Ralph's wild manner was cold in his veins.

CHAPTER XXVI.

PIERRE D'ANTONS PARRIES ANOTHER THRUST

AND now to tell something of the movements of Pierre d'Antons, which, of late, have been carried on behind the screen of the forest and beyond the ken of the reader.

The defeat of Panounia's warriors, on that night of fire and blood, knocked the adventurer's fortunes flatter than they had ever been. You may believe that he cursed Ouenwa bitterly, and wished that he had killed him long ago, when the lad threw his followers into the battle. It was then that D'Antons himself left his post beyond the scuffle, and, with desperate efforts, tried to turn the reverse back to victory. His swordsmanship and energy availed him nothing. He missed capture only by slipping the buckle of his sword-belt. Then, a fugitive from both sides, he ran to the woods, avoiding the scattered and retreating warriors who had so lately been struggling in his behalf as fearfully as he would have avoided William Trigget or Sir

Ralph Westleigh. One of his late comrades, trailing wounded limbs along the snow, hurled a Beothic curse after him. Another, better prepared, let fly a war-club, and missed him by an inch. He slashed on, through the underbrush, the drifts, and the dark, sure that capture by any of the defeated savages would mean death and perhaps torture.

The black captain did not run on any vague course, despite his haste. He knew where a possibility of help awaited him. He had given his wits to more than plans of revenge and kidnapping during his sojourn with Panounia. In winning the men to him, he knew that his hold upon them would not outlast defeat; but in winning the love of the Beothic maiden Miwandi, he had laid up store against an evil day. But he had not won her heart simply on a chance of defeat — far from it, for he had not dreamed of such a chance. It was a pleasant thing in itself to be the lover of that nut-brown, lithe-limbed, warm-hearted young girl — for Miwandi suspected nothing of his desire for, and plans concerning, the lady in the fort. She loved the tall foreigner quickly and surely. She was extravagantly proud of his power over the warriors of her people. He was her brave, and as such she cherished him openly, to the envy rather than the criticism of the other women of the encampment.

Miwandi was the daughter of a lesser chief of Panounia's faction. She was seventeen years of age. Her skin was ruddy brown, darker than the skins of some of her people and lighter than that of others. Her hair was brown and of a silken texture, very unlike the straight locks of the savages of the great continent to the westward. Her features were good, and her eyes were full of life and warmth. D'Antons' conquest rankled in the breasts of more than one of the young bucks of the camp.

Pierre d'Antons, fleeing from the fighting men of both parties, shaped his course for the lodge in which Miwandi dwelt. As he ran, with fear at his heels, he forgot to regret the girl in the fort; instead, a pang of honest affection for the comely young woman toward whom he was flying for help stirred in him. He stumbled into the lodge, and Miwandi caught him in her arms. In a few quick words, he told her of the defeat, and of the anger of Panounia's warriors toward him. She kissed him once, passionately, and then fell to collecting a few things — a quiver of arrows, a bow, furs, and some food. She pressed a bundle into his arms. He accepted it without a word. She bound her snow-shoes to her feet, and retied the wrenched thongs of his. Then they slipped from the dark

lodge to the darker woods; and his sheathless sword, damp with blood, was still in his hand. They heard the cries of the wounded behind them, and other cries that inspired them to flight.

They fled for hours, without pausing to ease their breathing. Of the two, it was the man who sometimes lagged, who often stumbled, and who cried once that he would rather be captured than strain limb and lung to another effort. D'Antons had been actively employed throughout the day, and again during the most desperate passages of the battle, and his strength was well-nigh exhausted. At last he fell and lay prone. In an instant the girl was beside him, pillowing his head and shielding his body from the cold, and revived him with brandy from the scanty supply in his flask. By that time the dawn was breaking gray under the stars, and all sounds of the chase had died away. She cut an armful of fir-branches, and with them and the skins she and D'Antons had carried, she made a rude bed and a yet ruder shelter. So they lay until high noon, fugitives in a desolate wilderness, with death, in half a dozen guises, lurking on either hand.

Behind D'Antons and Miwandi, the broken band of Panounia's followers soon gave up the hunt. Matters were not in condition to be mended by

killing a long-faced Frenchman and a pretty girl. The defeated savages had their own wounds to see to, and already too many dead to hide under the snow. A matter of sentiment, like the torturing and killing of their false leader D'Antons, would have to wait. Now, of all those valorous warriors who had menaced the little fort since the very beginning of winter, only ten remained unhurt. Panounia was dead. He had breathed his last in the edge of the woods, while the battle was still raging, and had been carried farther in by one of his men. Thus his death had remained unknown to the victors; as had also the deaths of many more of the besiegers. Wolf Slayer, that courageous savage lad who had once boasted of his deeds to Ouenwa, was desperately hurt. Painfully and hopelessly, those of the wounded who could move at all, the women, and the unhurt of the band, retreated toward farther and surer fastnesses. The wounded who could not drag themselves along were left to perish in the snow. Some were frozen stiff before morning. Some bled to death within the same time. A few lived until they were discovered by Ouenwa's men in the bright daytime, — they were reported as having been found dead.

D'Antons and Miwandi travelled, by forced marches, until they reached a wooded valley and

a narrow, frozen river. Along this they journeyed inland and southward. At last they found a spot that promised shelter from the bleak winds as well as from prying eyes. There they built a wigwam of such materials as were at hand. Game was fairly plentiful in the protected coverts around. They soon had a comfortable retreat fashioned in that safe and voiceless place.

"It will do until summer brings the ships," remarked D'Antons, busy with plans whereby he might give Dame Fortune's wheel another twirl. Sometimes he spent whole hours in telling Miwandi brave tales of far and beautiful countries. He spoke of white towns above green harbours, of high forests with strange, bright birds flying through their tops, and of wide savannahs, whereon roved herds of great, sharp-horned beasts of more weight than a stag caribou.

"Oh, but you do not mean to leave me, Heart-of-Life," she cried.

So he swore, by a dozen saints, that she, Miwandi, should be his queen in a palace of white stone above a tropic sea.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A GRIM TURN OF MARCH MADNESS

DAY by day, Sir Ralph Westleigh's mental sickness increased. It strengthened in the dark, like a blight on corn. Very gradually, and day by day, it grew over the bright surface of his mind and spirit. The sureness of its advance was a fearful thing to watch.

By the time March was over the wilderness, with a hint of spring in the morning skies, the baronet's condition was noticeable to even the dullest inmate of the settlement. The poor gentleman spoke little — and that little was seldom to the point. It seemed as if he had forgotten how to smile, or even to make a pretence at mirth. He walked alone for hours on the frozen river and through the woods. The Beothics of the camp before the fort stood in awe of him. At times he treated Beatrix and Bernard Kingswell as strangers; but he always knew Maggie Stone, and chided her often on the scantiness of his dinners.

All day, indoors and out, he wore a rapier at his side. In the cabin he spent half of the time inert by the fire, without book, or cards, or chess, and the rest of it in sword-play with an imaginary antagonist.

It was well for Beatrix that she had found Bernard's love before the fresh misfortune descended upon her. But even with that comfort and inspiration, her father's derangement affected her bitterly. They had been such friends; and now he had blank eyes and deaf ears for all her actions and words. It was twenty times harder for her than to have seen him struck down by knife or arrow. Death seemed an honest thing compared to that coldness and vagueness of spirit that gathered more thickly about him with the passing of each day. It was as if another life, another spirit, had taken possession of the familiar body and beloved features. After two weeks neither her kisses nor her tears had any potency to break through the awful estrangement. Her prayers, her fond recollections of their old companionship, brought no gleam to the dull eye.

By the end of March the busy boat-builders and smiths of the settlement — and every man save Sir Ralph was either one or the other — had two new boats all but completed. They were staunch crafts,

of about the capacity and model of the *Pelican*. They were intended for fishing on the river and the great bays and for exploration cruises.

William Trigget, who was a master shipbuilder as he was a master mariner, entertained great ideas of fishing and trading more openly than Sir Ralph had sanctioned in the past. He was for carving out a real home in the wilderness, and his wife was of the same mind.

"We couldn't bear to leave the boy's grave," he said.

Kingswell promised that, should he win back to Bristol, and find his affairs in order, he would use his influence in behalf of the settlement on Gray Goose River. Donnelly, too, was all for holding to the new land.

"It be rough, God knows," he said, "but it be sort o' hopeful, too. If they danged savages leaves us alone, an' trade's decent, I be for spendin' the balance o' my days alongside o' Skipper Trigget. There be a grave yonder the missus an' me wouldn't turn our backs on, not if we could help it."

Kingswell himself was not building any dreams of fixing his lot in that desolate place; and neither was old Tom Bent, though he spoke little on the subject. Ouenwa's ambitions continued to point overseas. Beatrix, now despondent at her father's

trouble, and again happy in her love, gave little thought to the future of the settlement, or to any plans for the days to come, save vague dreamings of an English home.

March wore along, and in open spaces the snow shrank inch by inch. Then rain fell; and after that a time of tingling cold held all the wilderness in a ringing white imprisonment. A man could run over the snow-fields and the bed of the river without snow-shoes; for the surface was tough as wood, white as the shield of that sinless knight, Sir Galahad, and glistening as a thousand diamonds. The mornings lifted clear silver and pale gold along the east. The evenings faded out in crimson and saffron, and the twilights, even when the stars were lit, made of the dome of heaven a bubble of thinnest green. And back of it all, despite the frost, hung a suggestion of sap-reddened twigs and blossoming trees.

The lure of the season touched every one in the fort, and the camp beside it. It ran in Sir Ralph's blood like some fabled wine — for what vintage of France or Spain is the stuff of which the poets sing. It mounted to his head with a high, unregretting recklessness, and doubled the madness that already lurked there. Something of his old manner returned, and for a whole evening he sat with Bea-

trix and Kingswell and talked rationally and hopefully. Also, that same night, he played a game of chess. He spoke of the future as one who sees into it clearly and without fear. He recalled the past without any sign of embarrassment. But Kingswell, meeting his eyes by chance, caught a light of derision in them.

Very early in the morning, while the stars still glinted overhead, and the promise of day was no more than a strip of pearl along the east, Sir Ralph Westleigh unbarred the door of his cabin and slipped out. He was warmly and carefully dressed in furs and moccasins. He carried his sword free under his arm. Very cautiously he scaled the palisade and dropped to the frozen crust of snow outside. The Beothic encampment lay around the corner of the fort, so he was safe from detection from that quarter. He looked about and behind with a cunning smile. Then he ran lightly into the woods.

Sir Ralph followed his aimless course for miles, and his soft-shod feet left no mark on the hard surface of the snow. Then the sun slid up and over, and in the warmth of high noon the frozen crust of the wilderness thawed a little, and here and there the baronet's feet broke through. At that he began to feel fatigue and a disconcerting pang of doubt.

He flung himself down in a little thicket of spruces, and called for Maggie Stone to bring him food and drink. He called again and again. He shouted other names than that of the old servant. In a sudden agony of fear, he jumped to his feet and plunged through the evergreens. At every third step he sank to his knee, or half-way up his thigh. He screamed the name of his daughter, "Beatrix, Beatrix" — or was it his dead wife he was calling? He cried for guidance to many great gentlemen of England who had been his boon companions in the old days, forgetting that death had taken some of them away from him, and that the rest, to a man, had turned of their own accord. Presently he ceased his foolish outcry and plodded along, with no thought of the course, sobbing the while like a lost child.

The sun began its downward journey, and still the baronet, with his sheathed sword under his arm, staggered across the voiceless wilderness. Toward mid-afternoon the thawing crust froze again, and he travelled with less difficulty. Ever and anon his poor eyes pictured a running figure in an edge of blue shadow before him. At times it was the figure of the nobleman he had killed in England, in the dispute at the gaming-table, and again it was a friend, — Kingswell or Trigget, or another

of the fort, — and yet again it was Pierre d'Antons. But no matter how he strove to run down the lurker, he lost him every time. Thirst plagued him, and he ate the clear ice and snow off the fronds of the spruces. Hunger gnawed him awhile, but passed gradually. The west took on the flame and glory of sunset. The east darkened. The stars pricked through the high shell of the sky. Night gathered her cloudless darkness over the wilderness; and still the demented baronet followed his aimless quest.

Toward evening of the day following Sir Ralph Westleigh's departure from Fort Beatrix, Pierre d'Antons and Miwandi were startled by the sudden and noiseless appearance of a gaunt and wild-eyed person in the doorway of their lodge. The woman cried out, and ran to the farthest corner of the wigwam. D'Antons staggered back, and his face turned gray as the ashes around the fire-stone. The unexpected visitor drew his blade, flung the sheath behind him on the snow, and advanced upon the fugitive adventurer. D'Antons sprang back and caught up his own sword from where it lay on a couch of branches and skins. He swore, more in wonder than anger.

"Westleigh!" he cried. "What brings you here, you fool — and how many follow you?"

The baronet halted and glanced quickly over his shoulder. He reeled a little, but his eyes changed in their light and colour.

"I am alone," he said. "Yes, I am alone." His voice was quiet. He seemed sorely puzzled. D'Antons' face regained its swarthy tints, and he laughed harshly.

"So you have hunted me down, old cock," he said, smiling. "You'll find that the quarry has fangs — in his own den."

The red of madness returned to Sir Ralph's eyes. He advanced his rapier. In a second the fight was on. For a few minutes the strength of insanity supported the baronet's starving muscles and reeling brain. Then his thrusts began to go wide, and his guard to waver. A clean lunge dropped him in the door of the lodge without a cry. The life-blood of the last baronet of Beverly and Randon made a vivid circle of red on the snow of that nameless wilderness.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE RUNNING OF THE ICE

It was Beatrix who first discovered her father's flight; but that was four hours after its occurrence. The fort was soon astir with the news. Men set out in all directions, in search of the missing one. Half a dozen of the friendly Beothics joined in the hunt. They went east and west, north and south. The sharpest eyes could detect no trail of the madman's feet. Beatrix insisted upon accompanying Bernard and Ouenwa. She tried to show a brave face; but something in her heart told her to expect the worst. The three travelled southward, and shortly before sunset returned to the fort, unsuccessful. They found that all the other searchers had got back, save Black Feather and a young brave named Kakatoc, who had set out together.

By the merest chance Black Feather and his companion happened upon the place where the baronet had first broken through the melting crust. With but little effort they found where he had rested

and taken up his journey again. Farther on, the faintness of the trail put an edge to their determination to find the unfortunate gentleman. It was a challenge to their woodcraft, and they accepted it eagerly. But within two hours of finding the marks, they lost them again. They ranged wide; and at last Black Feather discovered a footprint in a little pad of snow beside a stunted spruce. In several places the branches of the tree showed where the snow had been broken away, as if by a man's hand. It was enough to keep them to the quest.

Not in the next day, but in the early morning after that, the two Beothics happened upon a sheltered valley and a snow-cleared space, with a firestone in the middle of it, where a lodge had lately stood. As for signs of blood, there were none. Snow had been deftly spread and trampled over it. All around the so evident site of a human habitation the hard crust gleamed unbroken, save for a little path that ran down to a hole in the ice of the stream. After considering the place, and shaking their heads, the two ate the last of the food they had in their pouches and turned their feet back to the fort. They passed within a few paces of a dense thicket, in the heart of which the baronet's body lay uncovered. But how were they to know

it, when even the prowling foxes had not yet found it out!

For several days the search was continued by the settlers and their allies, but all in vain. It was not even suspected that the deserted camping-place which Black Feather and Kakatoc had seen had so lately been warmed by the feet of Pierre d'Antons and the blood of the lost baronet. For a few days longer the business of the settlement lagged, and the place wore an air of mourning, despite the ever-brightening and mellowing season. Then the axes struck up their chant again, and the little duties of the common day erased the forebodings of Eternity from the minds of the pioneers. Only Mistress Beatrix could see nothing of the reawakening of life and hope for the sorrow in her heart and the mist across her eyes. She had loved her father deeply and faithfully, with a love that had been strengthened by his misfortunes. She had felt toward him the combined affections of daughter and sister and friend. She had made allowances for the weaknesses of his later years that equalled the ever charitable devotion of a parent for a best-loved child. She had not been, and was not now, blind to the passion of gaming that had forced him to exile and an unknown death; but she had forgiven it long ago. As to the alleged murder

that had made such an evil odour in London, she believed — and rightly — that hot blood and overmuch wine had been to blame, and that her father's sword had been drawn after the victim's.

Bernard Kingswell did all in his power to comfort the bereaved girl. He urged her to spend much of her time out-of-doors. He told his plans for their future, and to cheer her he built them even more hopefully than he felt; for he realized that many difficulties were yet to be overcome before Bristol was safely reached. With Ouenwa, the two often went on long tramps through the woods. Their evenings were always spent together. Sometimes he read aloud to her, and sometimes they played at chess. One evening she got her violin, and played as wonderfully as she had on that other occasion; but instead of leaving him afterward without a word, as she had done, she laid the fiddle aside and nestled into his arms. He held her tenderly, patting the bright hair against his shoulder, and murmuring broken assurances of his love and sympathy. She wept quietly for a little while; but when she kissed him at the door, her face and eyes shone with something of their old light.

By mid-April knobs of rock and moss pierced through the shrinking snow in the open places; but in the woods the drifts continued to withstand the

wasting breath of the spring winds. Gray Goose River was no longer a broad path of spotless white. Its surface was mottled with patches of sodden gray; and an attentive listener on the bank might hear a myriad of tiny voices, some sibilant and some tinkling and liquid, in and under the enfeebled ice. Up and down the valley, between the knolls and wooded hills, the little streams were already snarling and roaring, and here and there flashing brown shoulders to the sunlight. Through all the wilderness ran a tingling whisper; and twilight, midnight, and dawn were stirred by the falling cries of wild-fowl on the wing. A faint, alluring fragrance was in the air — the scent of millions of swelling buds and crimson willow-stems.

About that time three warriors of the following of the dead Panounia arrived at the fort, with prayers for peace on their lips and gifts in their hands. They were received by Kingswell, William Trigget, and Ouenwa from the fort, and Black Feather and two of his chiefs from the camp. A lengthy business was gone through with, and much strong Virginian tobacco was burned. Documents were written in English and in the picture-writing of the natives, and read aloud, by Ouenwa, in both languages. Then they were solemnly signed by all present, and peace was restored to the great tribe

of the North, and protection, trade, and lands were granted for all time to the inhabitants of Fort Beatrix and their descendants. The three visitors went back to their people with rolls of red cloth and packets of glass beads, pot-metal knives, and other useless trinkets on their shoulders.

Shortly after their departure from the fort, a storm of rain blew up from the sou'east. All day the great drops thumped on the roofs of the cabins, on the skies of the lodges, and spattered on the sodden snow. The firs and spruces gleamed clean and black under the drenching showers. A veil of smoke-gray mist lay above the farther woods and along the black tangles of alders and gray fringes of willows. All night the warm rain continued to fall and drift. When morning lifted along the pearly east, a cry rang from the camp to the fort that the ice in the river was moving. The settlers hastened to the flat before the stockade. Beatrix was with them.

"See how the torn edge of ice overtops the bank," said Kingswell, pointing eagerly. "And there is an open space. Ah, it has closed again! How slowly it grinds along!"

"It will run faster before night," replied the girl, and Ouenwa, who was versed in the ways of his northern rivers, nodded silently.

While they watched, admiring the swelling, swinging, ponderous advance of the great surface, and harkening to the booming thunder of its agony that filled the air, a breathless runner joined the group and spoke a few quick words to Black Feather. That chief approached Ouenwa and whispered in his ear. The boy glanced quickly at Beatrix and Kingswell, and then questioned Black Feather anxiously. Presently he turned back to the lovers.

"The ice is stuck down-stream," he said. "Blue Cloud has seen it. He fears that the water will rise over the flat — and the fort."

The river continued to rise until evening. After that the waters subsided a little, great cakes of rotten ice hung stranded along the crest of the bank, and the main body ceased to run downward. But from up the valley the thunder of a hidden disturbance still boomed across the windless air.

"The jam had broken down-stream," said Ouenwa.

Kingswell, unused to the ways of running ice, was satisfied, and retired to his couch with an easy mind. He slept soundly until, in the gray of the dawn, Ouenwa shook him roughly, and all but dragged him to the floor.

"Wake up, wake up," cried the boy. "Damn,

but you sleep like a bear! The fort is in danger! We must run for higher land."

"Rip me!" exclaimed Kingswell, springing to his feet, "but what is the trouble? Are we attacked?"

"The river is all but empty of water," replied Ouenwa. "The ice sags in the channel, like an empty garment. The water hangs above, behind the third point where we cut the timber for the boats."

Kingswell, all the while, was busily employed pulling on his heavy clothes. Though he did not fully understand the threatening danger, he felt that it was real enough. While he tied the thongs of his deerhide leggins, Ouenwa told him that warning had reached the fort but a few minutes before.

"How?" inquired Kingswell, hurriedly bestowing a wallet of gold coins and some other valuables about his person.

Ouenwa, already loaded down with his friend's possessions, threw open the door and stepped out.

"Wolf Slayer brought it," he said, over his shoulder. "And I do not understand," he added, "for Wolf Slayer hates us all."

The other, close at his heels, made no comment on that intelligence. He scarcely heard it, so anxious was he for the safety of Mistress Beatrix.

The whole fort was astir; but Kingswell ran straight to his sweetheart's door. It was opened by the maiden herself. She and the old servant were all ready to leave.

An hour passed; load after load of stores and household goods was carried to the low hills behind the fort; and still the river lay empty, with its marred sheet of ice sagging between the banks; and still the unseen jam held back the gathering freshet. The women wept at the thought that their little homes were in danger of being broken and torn and whirled away. But Beatrix was dry-eyed.

"It will be no great matter for them to build new cabins in a safer place," she said to Kingswell.

He was looking at the natives dragging their rolled-up lodges to higher ground. He turned, smiling gravely.

"You have no love for the wilderness?" he asked, "and yet but for this forsaken place, you and I might never have met."

She laid her hand on his arm, and lifted a flushed face to his tender regard.

"So it has served my turn," she said. "Now that I have you, I could well spare these wastes of black wood and empty barren."

Kingswell had been waiting patiently and in silence for that confession ever since their betrothal.

Hitherto she had not once spoken with any assurance of their future together. She had treated the subject vaguely, as if her thoughts were all with the past and with the tragedy of her father's death.

"Would you face the homeward voyage in one of the little boats?" he asked, softly.

"Ay, with you at the tiller," she replied.

"Dear girl," he said, "I think that a stout ship called the *Heart of the West* will be setting sail from Bristol, for this wilderness, before many days."

"Would the fellow dare return?" she asked; for she had heard the story of Trowley's treachery.

"He will think himself safe enough," replied Kingswell. "No doubt he owns the ship now — has bought it from my mother for the price of a skiff, after telling her how recklessly he battled with the savages to save her son's life."

He laughed softly. "The old rogue will be surprised when I step aboard," he added.

Before she could answer him a booming report shook the sunlit air. It was followed, in a second, by a long-drawn tumult — a grinding and crashing and roaring — as if the firmament had fallen and overthrown the everlasting hills. The sagging ice below them reared, domed upward, and split with clapping thunders. It broke its plunging masses,

which were hurled down the stream and over the flats. A thing of brown water and sodden gray lumps tore the alders and swung across the meadow where the Beothic encampment had stood an hour before. The eastern stockade of the fort went down beneath its inevitable, crushing onslaught.

All day cakes and pans of sodden ice and snow raced down the river, and the air hummed and vibrated with their clamour. But the weight of the released waters had passed; and the fort had suffered by no more than an exposed side.

CHAPTER XXIX.

WOLF SLAYER COMES AND GOES; AND TROWLEY RECEIVES A VISITOR

WOLF SLAYER, who had brought warning of the menace of the freshet to Fort Beatrix, soon showed his evil hand. He had arrived at the fort in a starving condition and still weak from wounds received in the battle in which his father had been killed. Had he been well and filled with meat, he would undoubtedly have let the inmates of the fort and the camp lie in ignorance of the danger. For ten days he was fed and cared for by the settlers. By the end of that time, he felt himself again. The old arrogance burned in his eyes; the old sneer returned to his lips. Ouenwa read the signs and wondered how the deviltry would show itself under such unpropitious circumstances.

Ouenwa's sleep was light and fitful on the tenth night after the overflowing of the river. About midnight he awoke, turned over, and could not get back to his dreams. So he lay wide-awake,

thinking of the future. He could hear Bernard Kingswell's peaceful breathing. He thought of his friend, and his heart warmed to him with gratitude and comrade-love. He thought of Beatrix, smiled wistfully in the darkness, and put the bright vision away from him. What was that? He breathed more softly and lifted his head. Was it fancy, or — or what? He shifted noiselessly to the farther edge of the couch. A hand brushed along his pillow of folded blanket. Next moment he gripped an unseen wrist and closed with a silent enemy.

Minutes passed before the wrestlers stumbled against a stool, with a clatter that startled Kingswell to his feet. The Englishman leaped to the hearth, kicked the fallen coals to life, and threw a roll of birch bark on top of them. Then he stepped aside until the yellow flame lighted the room. The illumination was just in time, for Wolf Slayer had the lighter boy on the floor and the knife raised, when Kingswell saw his way to the rescue. He recognized the youth, and in a fit of English indignation at such a return for hospitality caught him by neck and belt and hurled him bodily from the prostrate Ouenwa. Wolf Slayer alighted on his feet, snatched open the door (which he had left ajar), and fled into the darkness.

A morning of late May brought a friendly native to Fort Beatrix, with word that three English ships were in Wigwam Harbour. Then Ouenwa and Tom Bent made the journey and returned, in due season, with the welcome news that one of the vessels was the *Heart of the West.*

Both the new boats and the old *Pelican* were made ready for the expedition. Kingswell commanded the *Pelican,* with Ouenwa and six natives for crew. Tom Bent was put in charge of the second boat, and Black Feather of the third. William Trigget and Donnelly were left to see that no harm came to Mistress Westleigh — and, as the boats stole down-stream, in the gray of the dawn, William Trigget treasured in his hand a duly witnessed document, in which Bernard Kingswell, gentleman, of Bristol, bequeathed and willed all his earthly goods to Beatrix Westleigh, spinster, of Fort Beatrix, in the Newfounde Land, and late of Beverly and Randon, in Somersetshire, England.

The parting between Beatrix and her lover had been a fond one, but the man had noticed (and in his heart regretted) the fortitude with which she bade him farewell and godspeed. He worried about it in his sleep, and again, as he looked longingly at her cabin in the bleak dawn. He tried to comfort himself with memories of a hundred incidents that

placed the sincerity of her love beyond a shadow of doubt. But, for all that, she might have shed a few tears. Surely she realized the chances of danger? — the risk he was running, for her sake? Love is edged and barbed by just such little and unreasonable questionings.

A white mist wreathed along the surface of Gray Goose River when the three boats swung down with the current. The Beothics were armed with English knives. There were no firearms aboard any of the little vessels. Kingswell and Ouenwa had swords at their belts, and Spanish daggers for their left hands. Tom Bent was armed with his oft-proved cutlass.

The sun did not get above the horizon until the little fleet was clear of the river's mouth. There a breath of wind sighed through the cordage, and the sails flapped up and rounded softly. Kingswell leaned forward and looked under the square canvas of the *Pelican's* big wing.

"An extra man," he remarked to Ouenwa, sharply. "Who has taken it upon himself to improve on my orders?"

A blanket-swathed figure, forward of the mast, turned and crawled aft. Then the blanket fell away, and Mistress Westleigh, rigged out in an

amazing mixture of masculine and feminine attire, laughed up at the commander.

"Promise to shield me from the wrath of Maggie Stone, when we go back," she whispered, in mock concern.

For a moment Bernard stared, with wonder and embarrassment in his eyes, the while Ouenwa hid a smile. Then he doffed his hat and caught the queer figure to his knee; and in the flush of the morning, under the grave regard of the Beothic warriors, he kissed her on lips and brow.

"What authority has Maggie Stone?" he cried. "If any one has a right to control your actions, surely it is I."

She slipped to the seat beside him. "And you told me I could not accompany you — that it would not be safe," she replied.

"Ay, but it was my duty to bid you remain behind," he said. "God knows it hurt me to refuse your so — so flattering a wish. But you accepted it calmly, dear heart."

"I accepted it for what it was worth," she laughed. "I could not shed tears over a parting which I felt certain was not to take place." Her face changed quickly from merriment to gravity. "I could not have stayed in the fort without you," she whispered. "Dear lad, I am afraid to death

whenever you are out of my sight. I do believe this love has made a coward of me!"

For a little while there was no sound aboard the *Pelican* save the tapping of the reef-points on the swelling breast of the sail, and the slow creak of the tiller. Ouenwa, leaning far to one side, gazed ahead, while the warriors crouched on the thwarts. Then the man stooped his head close to the girl's.

"But on this trip," he whispered, "you must obey me — for both our sakes, dearest. It would be mutiny else."

"I shall always obey you," she replied — "always, always — so long as you do not again leave me alone in Fort Beatrix."

"William Trigget was there," he ventured. "And Maggie Stone."

She laughed at that. "Poor Maggie!" she sighed. "Poor Maggie! She will rate me soundly for my boldness. She has ever a thousand discourses on the proprieties ready on the tip of her tongue."

"Ah, the proprieties," murmured Bernard, as if caught by a new and somewhat disconcerting idea. "Rip me, but I've never given them a thought!"

Beatrix laughed delightedly. "You must not let them trouble you now," she said. "When we get back to Bristol, I will guard myself with a dozen

staid companions, and — " She paused, and blushed crimson. " I forget that I am penniless," she added.

Kingswell's left hand closed over hers where it lay in her lap. " How long, think you, shall you stand in need of chaperons in Bristol? " he asked.

The three boats sought shelter in a tiny, hidden bay, and Kingswell, Mistress Westleigh, Ouenwa, and Tom Bent made an overland trip to a wooded hill overlooking Wigwam Harbour. There lay the *Heart of the West,* close in at her old anchorage after the day's fishing. Work was going briskly forward on the stages at the edge of the tide. The other vessels, which were much smaller than Trowley's command, lay nearer the mouth of the river harbour. The declining sun stained spars and furled sails to a rosy tint above the green water.

" Hark! " whispered Kingswell, touching the girl's arm, as she crouched beside him in the fringe of spruces.

A bellowing voice, loud and harsh in abuse, reached their ears.

" 'Tis Trowley," he said, and chuckled. " How will he sound to-night, I wonder? "

" You will not be rash, Bernard, — for my sake," pleaded the girl.

He assured her that he would be discreet.

It was dark when they got back to the little cove

in which the boats were beached. About midnight, with no light save the vague illumination of the scattered stars, they rowed out with muffled oars. They moved with such caution that it took them two hours to reach Wigwam Harbour. They passed the outer ships unchallenged. Then Beatrix was transferred from the *Pelican* to Black Feather's boat, and Tom Bent joined the commander. A veil of drifting cloud shut out even such feeble light as had disclosed the course to the voyagers. Before them the *Heart of the West* loomed dark, a thing of massed shadows and a few yellow lights.

The new-built boats lay about thirty yards aft and seaward of the ship. The *Pelican* stole in under the looming stern, with no more noise than a fish makes when he breaches in shallow water. The crew steadied her beside the groaning rudder with their hands. Kingswell stood on a thwart and peered in at the cabin window, as Ouenwa had peered on a night of the preceding season. The low, oak-ceiled room was empty. A lantern hung from the starboard bulkhead, and two candles, in silver sticks that bore the Kingswell crest, burned, with bending flames, on the table. On the locker under the lantern lay a cutlass in its sheath, and a boat-cloak in an untidy heap. The edge of the table was within two feet of the square stern-window.

For a little while Kingswell listened with guarded breath. Then, swiftly and lightly, he pulled himself across the ledge of the window, scrambled through, and crouched behind the table. Very cautiously he drew his rapier with his right hand and his dagger with his left. For a minute or two he squatted in the narrow quarters, breathing regularly and deeply, and harkening to the innumerable creaking voices of the decks and bulkheads, and the muffled voices and laughter from forward. For the occasion he had donned the hat, coat, breeches, and boots — all now stained and faded — in which Master Trowley had last seen him.

Suddenly a heavy, uncertain step sounded on the companion ladder just forward of the cabin door. A volley of stout Devonshire oaths boomed above the lesser sounds. The door flew open, smote the bulkhead with a resounding crack, and swung, trembling. The bulky figure of Trowley entered, and the heady voice of the old sea-dog cursed the door, and big, red hands slammed it shut again. Kingswell drew a deep breath, and composed his dancing nerves and galloping blood as best he could. His emotions were disconcertingly mixed.

The masterful old pirate (for such he surely was, deny the charge if you like) seemed to fill the cabin

to overflowing with his lurching, great body. He tossed boat-cloak and cutlass on the deck, and yanked up the top of the locker. With muttered revilings at the excessive cost of West Indies rum, he produced a bottle of no mean capacity from its hiding-place, and a fine glass sparkled in the candle-light like diamonds. Kingswell recognized the glass as one from which he had often drunk his grog — a rare piece from his house in Bristol. Those articles the mariner placed on the table, scarcely a foot from the watcher's head. Next he loaded himself a china pipe with black tobacco, and lit it at one of the candles. In doing so, Master Bernard heard the puffings and gruntings with which the deed was accomplished, like half a gale in his ear. At last the fellow sat down with a thud, squared his elbows on the table, gazed for a second at the square window that opened on to the mysterious gloom of the night, and tipped the bottle. The liquor gulped and gurgled in its passage to the glass. The reek of it permeated the air.

"Dang it," grumbled the mariner, "d'ye call this rum! Sink me, but it be half water!"

However, he swallowed the dose with gusto, and smacked his lips at the end of it as he never would have after a draught of water.

Very steadily and quietly Bernard Kingswell

arose to his feet and looked down at Master Trowley with inscrutable eyes shadowed by his wide, stained hat. The silence that followed lasted only a few seconds, but to the staring mariner it seemed a matter of hours. He sprawled on his low stool, open-mouthed, red-eyed, with his big hands nerveless on the table, and the lighted pipe unheeded at his feet.

"Traitor!" said Kingswell, coldly; and leaning across the table he tweaked the purple tip of Trowley's nose between thumb and finger. To do so, he laid his dagger on the edge of the mahogany for a second. The indignity called forth no more than a gurgle of terror from the master mariner. Kingswell plucked up the thin blade and flashed it within an inch of the whiskered face. Still the fellow sagged on his stool, unable to stir a muscle. Kingswell whistled three low notes. Ouenwa crawled through the port, with a coil of light rope in his hand. Tom Bent followed. Trowley threw off the spell of the supposed ghostly visitation and got to his feet with a bellow of rage and fear. In an instant he was flat on his back, with a gagging hand across his mouth and another at his throat. He was soon bound hand and foot, and securely gagged with a strip of his own boat-cloak.

Ouenwa stuck his head through the open port,

and whispered a word or two. One by one, four of his braves entered, with their knives unsheathed. Kingswell motioned them to follow, and softly opened the cabin door. On the port side of the alley-way, beside the companion ladder, Trowley's mate lay asleep in his bunk. Kingswell bent over him and saw that he was a stranger. He nodded significantly; and in an amazingly short time the mate of the *Heart of the West* was as neatly trussed up as the master.

Fifteen minutes later, Tom Bent hung over the rail, aft, and waved a lantern in three half-circles. And not long after that, Mistress Westleigh, Master Kingswell, and Ouenwa filled glasses with Canary wine, in the cabin of the *Heart of the West.* In the waist of the ship the stout English sailors and the skin-clad Beothics drained their pannikins, and eyed each other with good-natured curiosity. Old Tom Bent was toast-master; and also he told them an amazing story.

CHAPTER XXX.

MAGGIE STONE TAKES MUCH UPON HERSELF

SHORTLY before midnight, Tom Bent went quietly about the task of waking both watches and the Beothics. The three boats from Fort Beatrix were manned, with the muffling oars. The two small anchors by which the *Heart of the West* swung in the tide were fished into two of the boats by hand. It was a tough job; but, when it was accomplished, the ship was free without so much as a clank of cable or a turn of the noisy capstan. Hawsers were passed from the small craft over the bows of the ship, and at a signal from a lantern in Kingswell's hand, the men bent their backs to the oars. Then all lights aboard the *Heart of the West* were covered, and in the darkness, beside the great tiller, Kingswell caught his inspiration and his reward to his heart again.

The girl did not leave the commander's side, but kept watch on the high poop-deck throughout the journey. Until dawn the rowers held to their toil,

and after them, drawn by lines that were sometimes taut and sometimes under water, but always invisible in the darkness, the ship stole like a shape of cloud and dream. It was hard work, and slow. With the breaking of dawn, the leviathan took on signs of life. By that time she was hidden from Wigwam Harbour by more than one bluff headland. The pulling boats drifted to her bows, the capstan was manned, and the anchors were lifted to their places on the forecast rail. Headsails were set, and the square mizzen was run up. The boats dropped astern and were made fast, and the weary men climbed aboard the ship.

All day the *Heart of the West* threaded the green waterways of the great Bay of Exploits. A light and favourable breeze lent itself to the venture. After the midday meal, Beatrix, wrapped in a blanket, lay down by the mizzen and fell asleep. She was tired. The easy motion of the ship, and the song of the wind in ropes and canvas, sank her fathoms deep in slumber, with the magic of a fairy lullaby. Kingswell rigged a piece of sail-cloth from the bulwarks to the mast to shade her face from the sun.

At last the wide estuary, which ends in Gray Goose River, was reached. By sunset the mouth of the river was entered. Just then the wind failed.

The boats were manned again, and the ship taken in tow.

Still Mistress Westleigh slumbered peacefully, with the rough blanket about her dainty body and her head pillowed on Kingswell's folded coat. Kneeling beside her, Kingswell peered under the shelter of canvas, and saw that she was smiling in her dreams. How white were her dropped eyelids, and how clear and rose-tinted her small face. Her lips were parted a little, as if to whisper some sweet secret. A strand of her bright, dark hair was across her forehead, and one arm, clear of the blanket and the deerskin on which she lay, rested on the deck. The rosy palm was upturned. Kingswell stooped lower and kissed it softly. Standing up, he found Tom Bent beside him. The mahogany-hued mariner grinned sheepishly, and gave a hitch to his belt.

"Beggin' the lady's pardon," he whispered, "but, if the angels in heaven be half so sweet to look at as herself, I'm for going to heaven, in spite o' the devil. Sink me, but I'd play one o' they golden harps with a light heart if — if the equals of herself were a-listenin' on the quarter-deck."

Kingswell blushed and smiled. "You, too?" said he. "You are in love, Tom Bent."

"Ay, sir," replied the boatswain, "for it can't

be helped. I'm in love and awash, and danged near to sinkin'. Might as well expect a man to keep sober in the 'Powdered Admiral' on Bristol dock as within ten knots, to win'ward or lee'ard, o' your sweetheart, sir."

"I agree with you," replied the gentleman, bowing gravely.

Tom Bent pulled his scant forelock, and rolled away about his duty. He was mightily pleased with himself at having expressed his admiration for his young commander's choice in such felicitous terms. He prided himself on his eye for feminine beauty, no matter what the race or the rank of the fair one, — and a fairer than Mistress Westleigh he swore by all the gods of the Seven Seas he had never laid eyes on.

The long spring twilight was gathering into dusk when the toiling boats and the tall ship rounded the point, and opened the fort to the view of the daring cruisers. Directly in front of the stockade the anchors plunged into the brown current. The rattle of the cables through the hawse-holes awoke Beatrix. She had been dreaming of a great garden in Somerset, and of walking along box-hedged paths with her father on one side and her lover on the other. Opening her eyes upon the canvas shelter which Kingswell had spread above her, and

with the clangour of the running cables in her ears, for a second she did not know where she was. A vague fear oppressed her for a little. Then she recalled the incidents of the last two days, and was about to crawl from her resting-place, when the edge of the shelter was lifted, and Kingswell looked down at her.

"Wake up," he said. "We are at the fort, and Trigget and Maggie Stone are coming off in a canoe."

"Nay, then I'll stay here until you explain matters," she replied. "You must bear the brunt of Maggie Stone's displeasure for my sake." She sat up, laughing softly, and lifted her face in a way that only a dunce could fail to comprehend. Under cover of the strip of sail-cloth, he kissed the warm lips and the bright hair.

"Trust me," he laughed; and at that moment Trigget and the servant climbed to the poop by way of the ladder from the ship's waist. He advanced to meet them. He saw that Trigget held a folded paper in his hand, and that the honest eyes of that bold mariner were red and moist.

"What is it?" he inquired; for he had entirely forgotten, for the time being, the manner of Mistress Westleigh's joining with the expedition.

"Here be your will, sir," said Trigget, handing

him the paper. "It — it — well, maybe it'll not be o' any use now."

"Of course not," replied Kingswell, cheerfully, tearing it across.

Maggie Stone burst into tears. "Jus' the way Sir Ralph went," she sobbed. "Oh, my beautiful little lady — an' her fit mate for any nobleman of London town!"

"What the devil do you mean?" cried Kingswell. Then the truth dawned in his preoccupied brain. "Dry your eyes," he said. "She is safe and sound."

"Thank God for that," exclaimed William Trigget, devoutly.

"What — the mistress be safe, d'ye say?" cried Maggie Stone, with a sudden change of face.

Kingswell nodded curtly. He did not like being bawled at on the poop of his recaptured ship, even by an old serving maid. "Your mistress is safe — and in my care," he said.

"Indeed, sir?" she queried. "An' may I make so bold as to ax when ye married Sir Ralph Westleigh's daughter?"

William Trigget murmured something to the effect that his presence was required forward, and took his departure. Kingswell bit his lip and stared haughtily at the woman; but he was at a loss for

words fully expressive of his feelings. His indignation brought a flush to his cheeks which even the dusk of evening could not hide.

"Ye may well redden," cried Maggie Stone. "Ay, ye may well redden, after sailin' away with an unprotected lass, an' near terrifyin' her old nurse into fits."

The gentleman recovered his power of speech. "My good girl," he said (and she was a full twenty years older than his mother), "your joy at hearing of your mistress's safety takes a wondrous queer and unseemly way of expressing itself. You seem to forget that you, the lady's servant, are addressing the lady's betrothed husband."

The old maid glared and drew her scanty skirts about her.

"Maybe so," she retorted. "'Twould never have happened in Somerset."

At that moment Mistress Beatrix appeared suddenly from the other side of the mizzen.

"How dare you!" she cried. "How dare you speak so to Master Kingswell!"

Anger — quick, scathing anger — rang in her voice. Standing there in her short skirt, high, beaded moccasins, and blue cloth jacket, she looked like an indignant boy, save for her coiled hair and bright beauty.

"I am ashamed of you," she added; and then, turning quickly, she flung herself into Kingswell's ever ready embrace.

Maggie Stone was flustered and somewhat awed by the sudden attack. She had not been spoken to so for years and years. Would she resort to tears again, or would she answer back? She was jealous of the girl's love for Kingswell — and yet she had thanked God many times that that love had been won by the young Englishman instead of by the swarthy D'Antons. She sniffed, and mopped her eyes with the back of her hand. Then she changed her mind and bridled.

"What would the countess, your aunt, say to such behaviour?" she asked. "Her who watched over ye like a guardian angel in London town."

Beatrix turned, and, still holding her lover's hands, faced the carping critic.

"And who turned me out of her house at the last of it," she cried, scornfully. "Who is she, or who was she ever, to question my behaviour? And who are you, woman, to insult your mistress and the gentleman who saved you from the knives of the savages? Go back to the fort."

Maggie Stone saw that she had made a serious mistake, — a mistake which, perhaps, would alienate the lady's affection for ever. She turned, a

pitiable figure, and made to descend the steep ladder which stood close to the starboard side of the ship, and led to the waist. Her foot caught in a loop of rope that had not been properly stopped up to its belaying-pin. She lurched against the line that ran from the break of the poop to the bulwarks below, made a blind effort to right herself, and pitched over into the shadowed water below. She did not even scream.

Kingswell dropped his sweetheart's hands, ran to the side and jumped after the foolish old woman. By that time the twilight had left the river. The current carried him swiftly down-stream, close under the side of the ship. The water was uncomfortably cold, and his thick clothes dragged at his limbs. He cleared his hair from his eyes. A disturbance appeared on the surface of the stream a few yards ahead. With a quick stroke or two, he reached it, and caught Maggie Stone by a thin shoulder. She struggled desperately, mad with fright. Both were pulled over the gunwale of the *Pelican* not a moment too soon.

CHAPTER XXXI.

WHILE THE SPARS ARE SCRAPED

It is difficult to imagine the feelings of the skippers and crews of the good ship *Plover* and *Mary and Joyce,* when the gray light of dawn disclosed the fact that the *Heart of the West* had vanished completely. What a rubbing of eyes must have taken place! What a dropping of whiskered jaws and ripping of sea oaths!

"Sunk," said one heavy-shouldered mariner.

"Then where be her spars?" inquired a messmate.

"Cut an' run," suggested another.

"Then the devil must have been after her! Ol' Trowley'd run from nothin' else," replied the cook of the *Plover.*

The captain of the *Mary and Joyce* scanned the inner harbour and what he could see of the outer bay. Then he turned his brass telescope upon the cliffs and hills and inland woods.

"Maybe the French has towed mun out," he said at last.

No fishing was done that day. The neighbouring bays and coves were searched, and even the "River of Three Fires" was investigated, with a deal of trouble, for several miles up its swift current. That night the skippers of the two vessels decided, over several hot glasses, that Wigwam Harbour was no safe place for honest English sailor men. Next morning found them sailing northward in search of another haven from which to reap the harvest of the great bay.

To Fort Beatrix journeyed all the Beothics from many miles around, for a great trade was going on. Influenced by Maggie Stone's foolish outbreak, Beatrix and Bernard had decided to seek a priest in the port of St. John's on their way to England, and so cross the ocean as man and wife, to the bitter chagrin of Bristol scandal-mongers. Though the idea had not occurred to either of the lovers before the old woman's outcry in the name of suffering propriety, it was none the less to their liking now that they had accepted it.

"And it will please poor Maggie Stone," said the girl.

"I was not thinking of her," replied Kingswell,

lifting the glowing face to his by a hand beneath the rounded chin.

"Nor I, dear heart," she replied.

To the others of that wilderness the trading seemed a greater matter than that romantic attachment of a man and a maid. Blankets, trinkets, inferior weapons, and even the spare clothing of the settlers were bartered for pelts of beaver, mink, marten, otter, musquash, and red, patched, and black fox, to make up a cargo for the *Heart of the West*. The price of an axe-head was twice its weight in beaver skins. Even Maggie Stone, with an eye to adding to her nest-egg, traded a skillet (the identical implement with which she had floored D'Antons) for a beautiful foxskin. Only Trowley had no finger in the trading. Sullen and silent, he wandered about the fort, and a few paces behind him a brawny Beothic always stalked.

The storehouse of the fort was replenished from the well-stocked pantries and lazaret of the ship. Kingswell smiled grimly when, during the overhauling of the cabin lockers, he discovered choice wines, cheeses, and pots of jam which his lady mother had given to Master Trowley as a slight mark of her gratitude for his services to her son. He forced an admittance of these things from the old rascal himself. It had been as he had hinted

to Beatrix. The fellow had told the tearful and credulous lady that he had risked his life in her son's defence, during an engagement with the savages; and she, grateful heart, had made such an unbusiness-like agreement with him for the sailing of the ship that, had the voyage run its anticipated course, even a full load of fish would not have saved her from a shrewd loss. Happily for Trowley, Master Kingswell was far too happy for such trivial matters to really anger him.

"The old rogue staked his soul and lost on the last throw," he said to Beatrix, "and I staked my heart, and won all that the world holds of joy. Surely I should be a low fellow to add to his misfortunes, poor devil. I can afford to be charitable now."

They were seated on the grassy edge of the river meadow, looking out at the anchored ship, where sailors were repairing the rigging and scraping the spars. The girl did not seem keenly interested in Trowley's underhand behaviour to Dame Kingswell. As to his treachery toward Kingswell, to tell the truth, she was very grateful to the old thief for having sailed away and left her lover in the wilderness. Such thoughts flitted pleasantly through her mind.

"When did you stake your heart?" she asked, as if that were the core of the whole thing.

"I cannot tell you the date exactly," replied Kingswell, "but I was in Pierre d'Antons' company at the time, and — and I was mightily surprised to find Somersetshire people in this country. Lord, but your eyes were bright."

"Do you mean that you — do you mean that it happened on the first day of your arrival at the fort?" she queried.

"Surely," said he.

"And you loved me then?"

He nodded, smiling across toward the busy mariners in the rigging of his ship. His memories of those perilous days were fragrant as an English rose-garden.

"Do you know," she whispered, "that, though I felt sure I had made an impression on you then, I began to doubt it later. You were so self-satisfied that you shook my faith in my own powers to charm."

He laughed softly, and with a note of wonder. Then, for a little while, they were silent.

"Tell me," she said, suddenly. "Did you really love me that first day you came to the fort, or was it just — just surprise at seeing a — a civilized girl in so forsaken a place?"

He considered the question gravely and at some length. "I wanted to kill D'Antons," he answered, presently, "and I would gladly have given ten years of my life for a kiss from your lips, a caress from your hands. Was that love, think you?"

"I should call it a right hopeful beginning," she replied, brightly; but tears which she could not explain shone in her eyes. Across the hurrying water drifted the song of the men at work upon the tall masts of the *Heart of the West.*

"In a week's time," said Kingswell, "she will fill her sails for St. John's — and then for home."

The girl nestled closer to his side. Looking down, he saw that she was weeping.

"God grant that we find a parson in that harbour," he added. She nodded, and choked with a sob she could not stifle.

"Why do you weep, dearest?" he asked.

"For those whom we must leave behind," she whispered.

He had no answer to make to that. Together they looked beyond the anchored ship and the bright river to the inscrutable wilderness that held the fate of the mad baronet so securely.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE FIRST STAGE OF THE HOMEWARD VOYAGE IS BRAVELY ACCOMPLISHED

At nine o'clock of the morning of the twenty-second day of June, the bow of the *Heart of the West* was towed around and pointed down-stream by willing boats and canoes; a light wind filled such sails as were set, and the voyage was begun. Trigget fired a salute from a new gun which Kingswell had given him from the armament of the ship. It was answered by the barking of cannon and the fluttering of sails.

Ouenwa stood with Mistress Westleigh, Kingswell, and Maggie Stone, aft by the tiller, which was in the hands of Tom Bent. The lad was fairly wild with excitement. Now, it seemed to him, his great dreams were assured; and yet a pang of homesickness went through the joy like the blade of a knife, as he watched the faces of the clustered people along the meadow and in the boats grow dim, — the faces of William Trigget and

Black Feather, and of a dozen more who were dear to him. He shouted back to them in English and in his native tongue, and waved his cap frantically. The faces blurred and wavered. The ship swam around the wooded point, and meadow and stockade and camp of wigwams vanished like a picture withdrawn. The lad turned and glanced at Mistress Westleigh. Then he walked forward to the break of the poop, and blinked very hard at nothing in particular in the belly of the maintopsail.

Soon the wooded banks fell away on either side, and the water changed its tint of amber for wind-roughened green. The gray, purple, and brown shores of the roadstead widened and dropped lower, and azure uplands shone beyond their frowning brows. The wind freshened, and white flakes of foam whipped from crest to crest across the ever-shifting, ever-vanishing valleys of green. Along the fading cliffs white sea-birds circled and settled like flakes of snow. A few great gulls winged around the ship, fleeing to leeward like bolts of mist, and beating up again with quivering pinions.

Kingswell had taken the duties of sailing-master upon himself. He was as good a deep-sea navigator as any man on the whole width of the North Atlantic. When the outer bay was reached, yards were swung around, and the stout bark headed due

east at his orders. To see old Tom Bent push the tiller over, and other seasoned mariners man brace and sheet, at the command of that gold-haired youth, made the heart of Beatrix Westleigh flutter with pride. Her dark eyes, already bright and lovely beyond power of description, shone yet more brightly; and her cheeks, already flushed to clear flame by the wind, deepened their glow. As the ship answered to his will, so would he answer to her whim. It was a pleasant reflection to the lady; and to realize it she called softly. Without a glance at the straining sails, he turned and hastened to her side.

The voyage from Fort Beatrix to the wonderful harbour and brave little town of St. John's was made without accident, though not without incident. In Bonavista Bay, at a gray hour of the morning, the stump of a great iceberg was narrowly avoided. A day later, a large vessel that was evidently employed at fishing evinced an undesirable interest in the business of the *Heart of the West*. She was not a quarter of a mile distant when first sighted, for a light fog was on the water. She flew no flag, and changed her course and altered her speed with sinister promptness. Kingswell, and every man of the ship's company, knew that pirates of many nationalities infested those waters during

summer. The worst of the thieves were Turks; and the fishing-ship or store-ship that was overhauled by those gentry usually lost more than its cargo. Frenchmen, Englishmen, and Spaniards also had a weakness for playing the part of the bald eagle, with their heavy metalled and wide-sailed craft, to the rôle of the fishhawk so unwillingly played by the merchantmen. Happily for Kingswell's command, the stranger was inshore and to leeward. Both watches were piped up by Tom Bent. The gunners went to their quarters. Sail after sail unfurled about the already straining masts and yards. The brave little ship answered willingly to the pressure, and her cutwater broke the flanks of the waves into sibilant foam.

A rumour of the chase reached Mistress Beatrix and her old maid, in the seclusion of that snug cabin in which Master Trowley was, at one time, wont to revel. Maggie Stone drew the curtains across the thick glass of the after-port (as if fearing that the eagle glance of one of the pirates might pierce the privacy of her retreat), and then devoted herself to tearful prayer. Beatrix completed her toilet, threw a cloak over her shoulders, and climbed the companion. She joined Kingswell by the tiller, and, after saluting him tenderly and

with a composure that took no heed of the sailor at the helm, watched the chase with interest.

"They outsail us," she said, presently.

Kingswell nodded. "But she'll never get near us on that course," he replied. "She is for heading us off, and getting to windward. If she gets to windward of us — Lord, but I scarce think she will."

He said a word of preparation to the man at the tiller, and then gave a few quick orders from the break of the poop. In half a minute the *Heart of the West* headed out on an easy tack. When every sail was drawing to his liking, he returned to the girl.

"How glorious!" she cried. "A good horse, a singing pack, and an old fox make but slow sport compared to this."

"We are the fox on this hunting morning," smiled Kingswell.

"With teeth," she hinted.

He noticed that the unwelcome stranger was shouldering the wind on the new course. He looked at the girl.

"Ay, we have teeth, sweeting," he said, "and soon we'll be gnashing them."

Though the *Heart of the West* sailed well, to windward, the big craft astern sailed even better.

The ships, crowded with canvas, the dancing blue water and cloudless sky, and the brown and azure coast to leeward, made a fine picture under the white sun. As the stranger drew near and nearer, excitement increased aboard the merchantman. Old Trowley bawled to be set free, that he might not die in the sail-locker like a rat in a hole. Tom Bent spat on his hard hands, and pulled his belt an inch shorter. Ouenwa lugged up shot and powder, and was for opening fire at an impossible range. Beatrix roused Maggie Stone from her devotions, and took her forward to a place of greater safety in the men's quarters.

Along either side of the after-cabin of the *Heart of the West* ran a narrow passage. Each passage ended in a blind port, and behind each port crouched a gun of unusual size for so peaceful an appearing ship. Now Kingswell blessed the day that a youthful love of warlike gear and a heart for adventure had led him to add these pieces to the armament of his ship. He remembered, with a contented smile, how Master Trowley had growled at the delay caused by getting the great guns aboard and partitioning off the passage. Even his mother had urged him to put more faith in the great ship which the king was so gracious as to send to Newfounde Land each spring, as a convoy to the fishing fleet.

But Master Bernard, spoiled child, had had his way; and now he thanked the gods of war for it.

Both ships sailed as close to the wind as their models and rigging and the laws of nature would allow. They went about often on ever shortening tacks. The hunter outsailed the hunted, though it is safe to say that her seamanship was no better. Suddenly she luffed until her sails quivered, and from her bows broke two puffs of smoke with inner cores of flame. Both shots flew high, and fell ahead of the quarry in brief spouts of torn water. At that, the blind ports in the stern of the merchantman opened up, and the sinister muzzles of the guns were run out with a gust of English cheering. Then their sudden voices boomed defiance, and the smoke rolled along the water and clung to the leaping waves.

Kingswell felt the deck jump under his feet. His pulses leaped with the good planks. "Hit!" he cried — and sure enough, one of the enemy's upper spars, with its burden of flapping canvas, tottered desperately, and then swooped down on the clustered buccaneers beneath. Half an hour later the *Heart of the West* was spinning along on her old course, and far astern the stranger lay to and nursed her wound.

Three days later, at high noon, the Narrows

opened in the sheer brown face of the cliffs, and the people of the *Heart of the West* caught a glimpse of the harbour and the shipping beyond. Then the rocky portals seemed to close, and the spray flew like smoke along the unbroken ramparts. The ship was put about, and again the magic entrance opened and shut.

"I knows the channel, sir," said Tom Bent. "Ye needn't wait for no duff-headed pilot."

So the stout ship went 'round again, with a brisk shouting of men at the braces and a booming of canvas aloft. Her colours flew bravely in the sunlight, answering the colours of the fort and the battery on Signal Hill. She raced at the towering cliff as if she would try to overthrow it with her cocked-up bowsprit. Even Kingswell caught his breath. Beatrix looked away, so fearful was the sight of the unbroken rock that seemed to swim toward them with a voice of thunder and the smoking surf along its foot. Ouenwa wondered if Tom Bent were mad. But the boatswain gripped the big tiller, and squinted under the yards, and cocked an eye aloft at the flags and men on the cliff. Then, of a sudden, the narrow passage of green water, spray-fringed, opened under their bows, and the walls of rock slid aside and let them in.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

IN THE MERRY CITY

THE *Heart of the West* was boarded by a lieutenant of infantry, inside the Narrows, and was quickly piloted to a berth on the north side of the great harbour, where her anchors were merrily let go. The lieutenant welcomed Master Kingswell in the governor's name, and vowed to Mistress Westleigh that the old shellback (with so little respect will a subaltern sometimes speak of his superior into safe ears) would never have allowed his gout to keep him ashore had he guessed that the new arrival carried such a passenger.

"But his Excellency is a sailor," he added, "so, after all, he'd blink his old eyes at you unmoved. These sailors, ecod, are not the worshippers of beauty that the poets would have us believe."

He bowed again, very fine in his new uniform and powdered hair. Beatrix shot a glance at Kingswell, who seemed in no wise conscious of the dimness of his own attire and the rents in the silk

facings of his coat. Then she smiled upon the soldier.

"Both the army and navy have my esteem," she said, "but my particular fancy is for the Church."

The lieutenant seemed overwhelmed. "Say you so?" he cried. "And to think, mistress, that I refused to take Holy Orders, despite the combined persuasion of both my parents and my uncle, the Bishop of Bath. Stab me, but why did not my heart give me a hint of your preference?"

"Perhaps you have a parson ashore," suggested Kingswell.

"Ay, we have a parson — a ranting old missionary," replied the lieutenant.

"He'll serve my turn," said Beatrix, "so long as he can read the marriage service."

"Ay, he'll serve our turn," said Kingswell.

The soldier sighed, and smiled whimsically from the one to the other. He was not much older than Bernard Kingswell, and of a pleasant, boyish countenance.

"You have a story," he said, "with which I hope you will honour us in the governor's house. A brave tale, too, I'll stake my sword." He smiled good-naturedly at Master Kingswell. "But d'ye know," he added, gazing at Mistress Westleigh,

"I had quite set my heart on it that you two were brother and sister."

The governor received them in his best coat, with one foot in a boot, and the other swathed to the bulk of a soldier's knapsack. His face was of the tint of russet leather, and roughened by many inclement winds and darkened by high living. His voice was of a rancorous quality, as if he had frayed it by too much shouting through fogs and against gales. His hands were big, knotted, and tremulous, and his eyes not unlike those of a new-jigged cod-fish. Altogether he was a figure of a man for his place as king's representative. He led Mistress Beatrix to a chair with such grace as he could command, and presented a ponderous snuff-box to Master Kingswell. Then he called for refreshments. The lieutenant made himself at home beside the lady, and waited upon her with wine and cakes. When the servants were gone and the door closed, Kingswell stated his name and degree.

"Let me shake your hand again, young sir," cried his Excellency, extending an unsteady hand. "Your honoured father dined and wined me more than once in his great house in Bristol, — ay, and treated the poor sailor like a peer of the realm."

Kingswell leaned sideways in his chair and gave

a brief account of Sir Ralph Westleigh's and Mistress Westleigh's sojourn in the wilderness, and of the baronet's death. He did not mention the fact that the fort was still inhabited, nor did he give a very definite idea of its whereabouts. It was well to be cautious in regard to unchartered plantations in those days of greedy fishermen. He mentioned the brief engagement with the buccaneer. He told of his betrothal to Mistress Westleigh, and of their anxiety to be married immediately. The governor was deeply affected by the story of Sir Ralph Westleigh's last days. He murmured an oath. "And the day was," he said, "that not a duke in England was more looked up to than that same baronet of Somerset. Well do I recall the pride that inflated me when Lady Westleigh — ay, the young lady's mother — bowed to me in Hyde Park. Only once had she met me, and that in a crush to which I'd been invited through my commander. And she was as beautiful as she was gracious, sir. 'Twas after her death that Sir Ralph threw over his ballast, poor devil."

Kingswell nodded, and remembered the winter of alarms and loneliness.

"They were bitter years for the daughter," he said, softly. "Motherless, and with a father whom she loved letting slip his old pride and honour day

by day, she shared his downfall and his exile with fortitude, sir, I can assure you."

"Ay, as became her brave beauty," replied the governor, with a gleam in his staring eyes.

Now fate would have it at that time the only divine in the great island, the Reverend Thomas Aldrich, M. A., was away from the little town of St. John's, on a preaching tour among the English fishermen in Conception Bay. He might be back in a day's time; he was more likely not to return within the week.

"In the meantime," said the honest governor, "my house is at Mistress Westleigh's service. Let her send for her maid and her boxes. My good housekeeper will tidy up the best chamber. Gad, Master Kingswell, but we'll cheer this God-forsaken, French-pestered hole in the rock with a touch of gaiety."

His Excellency's hospitality was accepted, and for eight days the little settlement gave itself over to merrymaking. There were dances in the governor's house every night, at which Beatrix was the only lady. There were great dinners, during which Beatrix sat on his Excellency's right and Kingswell on his left. There were inspections of the fort, boating parties on the harbour, and outings among

the woods and natural gardens that graced the valley at the head of the beautiful basin.

The beauty and graciousness of Mistress Westleigh, and the knowledge of her loyalty to her father, and her bravery won the heart of that rude village. From the governor to the youngest sailor lad, every man in the harbour was her humble and devoted servant.

Before the kindly soldiers and merchants and adventurers, she was always merry. The main street along the water-front took on a light of distant England did she but appear in it for a minute. The three officers of the garrison swore that they preferred it to the most fashionable promenade on London. But, alone, or with her lover, she eased, with tears, the grief for her father's fate, which all the junketing and gaiety but seemed to uncover.

On the eighth day after the arrival of the *Heart of the West* in the harbour of St. John's, the parson returned from his preaching among the boisterous fishing-ships in Conception Bay. He shook his head at the state in which he found his home flock; for he was of that gloomy persuasion known as low church, and held little with frivolity. But, after meeting Beatrix, he thawed, and even went so far as to attempt a pun on his willingness to marry

her. The sally of wit was received by the lady with so lovely a smile that the divine forgot his austerity so far as to poke Kingswell in the ribs, and call him a sly dog.

The ceremony took place in the little church behind the governor's house; and, after it was over, his Excellency, the parson, the officers of the garrison, the merchants, the captains of the ships, and many more, accompanied the happy couple aboard the *Heart of the West,* where sound wines were drunk by the quality, and rum and beer by the commonalty. All the shipping, the premises of the merchants, and the forts flew bunting, as if for a demonstration to royalty itself. At noon farewells were said, and a dozen willing boats towed the *Heart of the West* down the harbour and through the Narrows.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

PIERRE D'ANTONS SIGNALS HIS OLD COMRADES, AND AGAIN PUTS TO SEA

THE wilderness, that grim thing of naked rock, brown barren, gray marsh, and black wood, which had claimed the mad baronet so surely, was unable to keep Pierre d'Antons in its spacious prison. With the return of summer, the dark adventurer and the Beothic girl deserted their inland retreat, and set out for a certain grim cape which thrusts far into the Atlantic. The crown of that cape affords an uninterrupted view to seaward and north and south across the waters of two great bays. A fire at night, or a column of smoke in the day, glowing or streaming upward from that vantage place, would be sighted from the deck of a passing ship at a distance of many miles.

The journey proved a long and trying one, through swamps and barrens, and over rock-tumbled knolls. Streams were forded, lakes circumambulated, and rivers crossed on insecure rafts.

Through it all, the native girl, Miwandi, kept a brave heart and bright face. D'Antons, however, was preoccupied in his manner, and even gloomy at times. The hardships of that wild existence had begun to tell on his body, and the loneliness to fret his nerves. His infatuation for Mistress Westleigh had dimmed and faded out altogether, leaving only a mean desire for the salve of revenge with which to soothe his injured pride. He would wound her through Kingswell. Sometimes a fear oppressed him that his men might have forgotten his mastery by this time, and might fail, after the two seasons of silence, to continue their cruising of those northern waters throughout June and July, as he had commanded. But that doubt only troubled him in his darkest moods. The loyalty of his subordinate buccaneers of the *Cristobal* was not to be questioned seriously, for it had been tested in many tight places. Comradeship often forms as trusty ties between the hearts of pirates as between the hearts of honest gentlemen. Once grown beyond the temptations of greed and treachery, it is a safe thing, this loyalty of desperate men for their messmates.

It was Pierre d'Antons' dream to regain the deck of the *Cristobal* (with Miwandi, of course), and to appear, some fine day, before the little fort of

Gray Goose River; to put the settlers to the sword, the buildings to the torch, and to carry the English beauty away with him. He felt that his passion for the proud lady might be easily and pleasantly refired. But he made no mention of Mistress Westleigh to Miwandi, the Beothic girl.

After more than a week of hard travelling, the two ascended the wooded ridge which runs seaward to the bleak and elevated acres of the grim cape of their desire. In a shaggy grove they set up their lodge. At the extremity of the headland, high above the wheeling, screaming gulls and noddies, D'Antons built a circular fireplace of the stones that lay about. Completed, it looked like an altar reared by some benighted priesthood to the gods of the wind and the sea. But no such thought occurred to its architect. His case was too desperate to allow his mind to indulge in such whimsical fancies.

While the woman went in quest of food — fish, flesh, or fowl, what did it matter which? — the man gathered wood and piled it near the queer hearth. He worked without intermission until Miwandi returned from her foraging with a string of bright trout in her hand. Then he built a modest fire within the rough walls of his furnace, and helped the girl clean and cook the fish. By that

time the glow of the afternoon was centred behind the gloomy hills, and a clear twilight was over the sea; but as yet the atmosphere held no suggestion of dusk. No sail broke the wide expanse of dark blue ocean with its flake of gray; but to the nor'-east a whale breached and blew its little fountain of spray across the still line of the horizon. D'Antons and Miwandi noted these things as they ate, but made no comment upon them.

For several days after the arrival of the two upon the overseeing headland, D'Antons made no other use of his furnace than for the cooking of meals. For that purpose it served admirably, for the walls protected the flame from the ever-flying winds that prevailed over that exposed spot. The adventurer knew that he was early for the *Cristobal*. Several sails were detected; but of them the only heed taken was the precaution of blanketing the little fire in the hearth with damp soil. The Frenchman did not desire a visit from fishermen of any nationality whatever. He might find it difficult to explain his presence in so unfavourable a spot for either a fishery or a settlement. No doubt they would persist in rescuing him, and, in that case, what reason could he give for wishing to stay in his cheerless camp? So he lay low and watched the

passing of more than one stout craft without a sign.

The time arrived when he must set his signals, despite the risk of attracting unwelcome visitors. So he closed the front of the furnace with a boulder, built a brisk fire within, which he heaped with damp moss and punk, and then laid a large, flat stone over the opening in the top of the unique structure. By removing the flat stone, he allowed a column of dense smoke to issue into the air, stream aloft and scatter in the wind. By replacing the stone, the smoke was cut short off. Finding that the contrivance worked to his satisfaction, he let the smoke stream up, uninterrupted. The signalling would only be resorted to when a vessel, which might possibly be the *Cristobal,* should be sighted. When darkness fell, the fire was allowed to die down. A night signal was unnecessary, as the *Cristobal,* should she keep the tryst at all, was sure to make an examination of the cape by daylight. D'Antons' last orders had been strictly and particularly to that effect.

A week passed, during which a sharp lookout was kept by the fugitives on the brow of the cape, and the signal of smoke was operated a dozen times without the desired effect. In fact, a large vessel, attracted by the smoke (which was due to D'An-

tons' tardy realization that the approaching ship was not the *Cristobal*) altered her course, sailed close in, and sent a boat ashore to investigate. D'Antons and Miwandi had just enough time, with not a minute to spare, to roll up their wigwam and hide it in the bushes, gather together their most valuable belongings, and flee inland to a shelter of tangled spruces and firs. The boat's crew was composed of peaceful fishermen, who were free from suspicion and malice. They climbed to the brow of the promontory with fine hardihood, but once there did little but examine the marks where the lodge had so lately stood and partially overthrow the queer fireplace. They believed that structure to be an altar, built to the glory of some unorthodox god. Then they retraced their perilous way to the little cove under the cliff, and rowed back to the ship. D'Antons stole from his retreat and crawled to the edge of the cliff. He felt a glow of satisfaction when the big vessel stood away on her northward course.

Another week drifted along, and hope wavered in the buccaneer heart. His gloomy moods began to wear on the young squaw's spirits. She begged him to return to the inland rivers — to make peace with her people — to cease his unprofitable staring at the sea.

"The sorrow of the great salt water has entered your heart," she said, "and the moaning of it has deafened your ears to my voice."

He did not turn his eyes from the undulations of the gray horizon. "Would you have me rot in this place for the remainder of my life?" he asked, harshly, in her language.

The poor girl sobbed for an hour after that, and reproved her heart for the image of a god it had set up. She tried to overthrow the idol from its inner shrine; she tried to change it to a grim symbol of hate; she pressed her face to the coarse herbage, and tore the sod with her fingers.

"Miwandi! Come to me, little one," cried the man from the edge of the cliff.

Her anger, her bitterness, vanished like thinnest smoke. She sprang up and ran to him. He drew her to his side, and with his right hand pointed southward across the glinting deep.

"The *Cristobal!*" he cried. "Good God, I'll stake my life on it!"

So intense was his satisfaction at the sight of those unmistakable topsails that his selfish affection for the woman lighted again. He pressed his lips to the tear-wet cheek; and immediately the simple creature was in the seventh heaven of bliss.

While the gray flake of sail expanded on the

horizon, Pierre d'Antons and the woman hurriedly and roughly rebuilt the walls of the fireplace, lit and fed a blaze, and piled it high with moss and rotten bark. The thick pillar of smoke arose like a tree, and bent in the moderate wind. Miwandi busied herself with breaking the wood to the required length and carrying damp moss. For several minutes the smoke was allowed to ascend in an unbroken shaft. Then D'Antons cut it off for a few seconds, let it rise again, broke it again, and again let it stream aloft, uninterrupted. He had signalled his name according to the code of the *Cristobal.*

The welcome ship gradually enlarged to the eager eyes of the watchers on the cape. North, east, and south there was no other sail in sight. At last three flags ran up to the topforemast and fluttered out. The question was read instantly by D'Antons, who returned to his fire and interrupted the stream of smoke five time in quick succession. The translation of that was "All's well. You may approach without danger."

A message of congratulation appeared promptly against the bellying foresail of the *Cristobal;* and the watchers saw the rolls of white foam gleaming like wool under the forging of the bow.

D'Antons was cordially welcomed aboard the

Cristobal. Miwandi was received without question. The acting commander of the ship was a grizzled Spanish mariner by the name of Silva, — a fellow steeped in crime and uncertain of temper, yet possessed of a marvellous devotion for D'Antons, which was due to an act of kindness performed by the Frenchman years before, in the town of Panama.

Silva was delighted to find his captain alive and ready for the high seas again. He asked no questions concerning his adventures until more than one bottle of wine had been emptied, and the captain's travel-stained garments had been exchanged for the best the cabin lockers contained. Miwandi, too, was reclothed; and the beauty and softness of the silks that were presented to her fairly turned her little head. She did not know that the fair French lady for whom they had been made, in gay Paris, and who had worn them only three months ago, was somewhere in the dredge of emerald tides between the Bahaman reefs. She knew only that the texture and colours delighted her skin and her eyes. So, in her narrow room, she attired herself in the finery, toiling at the ties and lacing with unfamiliar fingers.

In the captain's cabin D'Antons motioned to his friend to close the door. He had consumed a soup,

and was still engaged with the wine. Silva returned to his seat at the table, after a final reassuring push on the bolt of the door. It is always wise to be sure that the door you considered fastened is fastened indeed. Then, with their elbows on the table and their heads close together, the more salient incidents of D'Antons' sojourn in the wilderness were rehearsed and keenly listened to. Silva displayed a prodigious indignation at the story of the captain's failure to win the affections of Mistress Westleigh. At word of Sir Ralph's death (and the murder became a desperate duel in the telling), a crooked smile of satisfaction distorted his face. As to what he heard of Kingswell — ah, but oaths in two languages were quite inadequate for the expression of his feelings.

"We'll inspect the heart of that cockerel — and the gizzard as well," said he, and drank off his wine.

"Leave him to my hand," replied D'Antons, darkly.

Silva nodded, with a sinister leer.

"So it's 'bout ship and blow the little stockade into everlasting damnation," he said.

"Ay, but the lady must come to no harm in the attack," warned the captain.

So the *Cristobal* headed northward, and the evil-

looking rascals of her crew were informed that the morrow would bring them some work to limber their muscles. The information was received with cheers, in which hearty English voices were not lacking.

However, in the early morning, Fate, in the shape of the *Heart of the West,* turned the danger away from the little fort.

"She looks like a likely prize," said D'Antons, when he sighted the ship. The old fever awoke in his blood. He longed for the old excitement.

"Give chase," he ordered. "The fort can well do without the honour of our attentions for a little while."

So the chase was carried on, as has been described in a previous chapter, and went merrily enough for the *Cristobal* until the unexpected shot from the stern of the quarry brought down her foretopmast and its weight of sail. But before that had happened, D'Antons, unrecognizable himself in new clothes and a great hat, marked Bernard Kingswell on the poop of the *Heart of the West.* He cursed like a madman, or a true-bred pirate, when his ship was crippled.

"The fort may rot of old age in the midst of its desolation," he cried to Silva, "for what I would have is aboard that cursed craft ahead."

A few days later, with their spars repaired, they picked up a small fishing-boat, and learned from the skipper that a great ship from the north had entered the harbour of St. John's. So, knowing the virtue of precaution, they impressed the master and crew and scuttled the little vessel. Then, with admirable patience, they cruised up and down, far to seaward of the brown cliffs which guarded that hospitable port.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE BRIDEGROOM ATTENDS TO OTHER MATTERS THAN LOVE

THE dainty bride leaned on her husband's arm, and together they looked back and waved farewell. Flags answered them from the battery above the cliff. Then she turned to the bridegroom and gazed into his eyes with so radiant and tender a smile that, all forgetful of the abashed salt at the tiller, he drew her to him and kissed her on brow and lips.

"Dear wife," he murmured, and could say no more.

Both were brave in marriage finery, — she in a pearl gown of brocaded silk, a scarlet cloak lined with white fur, and a feathered hat, and he in buff and blue from the wardrobe of the commandant of St. John's.

They gazed astern, across the dancing azure, to the brown and purple rocks beautified by the sunlight and crystal air. "Homeward bound," she

whispered, happily, and turned her face from the mellowing coast of the wilderness to the wide east.

Together they walked forward to the break of the high deck. A fair wind bellied the sails. The tarred rigging and scraped spars shone like polished metal. The men, in their brightest sashes and cleanest shirts (in honour of the occasion), went about their duties briskly. The mates wore their side-arms; both watches were on deck, with the gaiety of the days ashore still in their hearts. Not a soul was below save the cook (who sorted provisions in the forward lazaret), Maggie Stone (who sulked in her mistress's cabin because she had not been asked to act as bridesmaid), and old Trowley, with wrists and legs in irons and a dawning repentance in his sullen blood.

An hour later Ouenwa ascended the starboard ladder from the waist, and stood beside Master and Mistress Kingswell. He wore a dashing outfit, which had been made to his shape by the garrison tailor in the days preceding the marriage. A sword was at his belt; lace hung at his wrists; his dark hair, slightly curled, fell to his shoulders. His tanned cheeks were flushed with the excitement passed and the adventures anticipated. Only the dark alertness of his eyes and the litheness of his actions bespoke his primitive upbringing. Though

he had been named "dreamer" by his people, he gave promise now of a life of deeds rather than of dreams.

"Do you mourn the little stockade and the great river, lad?" queried Kingswell, laying a hand on the boy's shoulder.

Ouenwa shook his head emphatically and glanced knowingly aloft. "Why should I mourn them?" he asked. "Am I not bound for castles and great houses, for books in number as the leaves of the birch-tree, and for villages filled all day with warriors, and with ladies almost as fair as Mistress Beatrix? Shall I not read in the books, and see horses, greater than caribou, bearing gentlemen upon their backs? Then why would you have me mourn? The land behind us is not a good land. My fathers were brave and wise, and led their warriors to a hundred victories; but they were murdered by their own people. I care not for such a country."

"True, lad," replied Kingswell, "and yet, even in glorious England, you may find ingratitude as black as that of Panounia. Even kings and queens have been guilty of ingratitude."

Beatrix patted the moralist's arm.

"Why think of it now?" she said, gently, "and why fill the dear lad with doubt? Only if he climbs

high need he fear disloyalty. As a plain soldier, he shall never lack the protection of such humble friends as ourselves."

Just then a lookout warned them of a sail on the larboard bow. Kingswell and Ouenwa went forward to the forecastle-head. Tom Bent (now of the rank of chief gunner) was already there, peering away under the lift of the jibs. The second mate was with him.

"A large vessel," remarked Kingswell.

"Ay, and we's spoke mun afore now, sir," replied Bent. He was too intent on gazing ahead to see the question in the captain's face. But the mate saw it and answered it.

"She's run up a new spar, sir, an' mended her for'ard riggin'," said he, "an' like enough she thinks she'll take the cost of damages out o' us."

"Ah!" exclaimed Kingswell, with a note of relish. Then he remembered Beatrix, and a shadow darkened his eyes for a moment. "Pipe both watches," he said, quietly. "Arm all hands. Clear decks for action. Master Gunner, you must fight your barkers to-day for more than the glory of England."

He returned to his wife and told her of the menace. She heard the news with an inward sick-

ening, but with no outward tremor. All her fear was for him.

"Promise me that you will go to our cabin when I give the word," he asked.

She nodded and smiled wistfully. "Your obedient, humble wife, my lord," she whispered, with a brave attempt at gaiety.

He caught her hands quickly to his shoulders and kissed her lips. He felt them tremble against his.

"I must help with the preparations, dear heart," he murmured, and hurried away. He consulted the mates and Tom Bent as to the advisability of beating back for St. John's. The mariners shook their heads. They held that the *Heart of the West* could make a better fight on her present course; and that the battle would be decided, one way or another, before the garrison could send them any help. As if to confirm their views, the wind freshened to such a degree, and held so fair astern, that to beat to windward would require all hands at the sails, and put gunnery out of the question.

"Like enough they be double our strength in men," said Tom Bent, "but we equals 'em in guns and seamanship, sir, an' ye may lay to that."

So the *Heart of the West* held on her course under a press of canvas.

After Kingswell and Beatrix had talked together for some time, they went forward, hand in hand, to the break of the poop. Tom Bent called the ship's company to attention. The brave fellows, stripped to their breeches and shirts in readiness for the approaching encounter, looked up, and such as wore caps doffed them respectfully.

"My brave lads," cried the lady, in a voice that rang clear above the stir of wind and wave and tugging cordage, "but this morning you made merry for my sake; and now, in so little a while, you will risk your lives in defending your ship and me from that pirate whom we have already encountered. My husband, — your captain, — like a true-bred English sailor, is already sure of victory. A generous mariner, he has promised me the prize; and now I promise it to you. In a few weeks' time, my lads, we shall sell our enemy in Bristol docks. Not a penny of her price shall go to owner or captain; but all into the pockets of this brave company. And should any man fall in the encounter, I pledge my word that those dependent upon him shall lack nothing that money can give them during the remainder of their lives. Now, fight well, for God and for England."

She looked down at them, smiling divinely.

"And for the Lady Beatrix," shouted a youthful seaman.

Cheers rang aloft; bearded lips and shaven lips bawled her name; and great, toil-seared hands were brandished, and stark blades gleamed in the sunlight.

"God bless you, lady," they roared.

She leaned forward and blew a kiss from her lips with both dainty hands.

"God strengthen you, brave hearts," she cried, softly; and the nearer of the loyal mariners saw the tears shimmering beneath her lashes.

The *Heart of the West* held on her course, breaking the waves in fountains from her forging bow. The *Cristobal* raced down upon her with the wind square abeam. It was evidently her intention to cross the merchantman's bows and rake her with a broadside.

Aboard the *Heart of the West* every man was at his post, and the matches were like pale stars in the hands of the gunners. The second mate was on the forecastle-head, beside the bow-chaser. The first mate stood in the waist. Kingswell paced the poop, fore and aft. Each measured and calculated the brisk approach of the *Cristobal* with unwinking eyes, and considered the straining sails overhead and the speed of the wind.

Still the pirate boiled down upon them, leaning over in the press of the half-gale. It was evident to Kingswell that she would pass across his bows within a distance of a hundred yards, unless something was done to prevent it. He spoke quietly to the men at the tiller, and called an order to the officer amidships. Twenty seconds later he gave the signal. The tiller was pushed over, the yards were hauled around, and the good ship swung to the north and took the wind on her larboard beam. Now the vessels leaned on the same course, and were not two hundred yards apart. Almost at the same moment they exchanged broadsides, and the challenging shouts of men mingled with the roaring of the little cannonades. The smoke from the merchantman's ports blew down, in a stifling cloud, upon the enemy. The *Cristobal* fell off before the wind in an unaccountable manner. The *Heart of the West* luffed, in the hope of bringing her heavy after-battery to bear, saw that the manœuvre could not be accomplished, and flew about on her old course.

"Her tiller is shot away," cried Kingswell. A cheer rang along the decks and penetrated the cabins fore and aft. Beatrix heard it, and thanked God. Old Trowley heard it, and, beating his man-

acled wrists against the bulkhead, roared to be cast loose that he might bear a hand in the fight.

From that first exchange of round-shot, the *Heart of the West* escaped without hurt, owing to the fact that the enemy's guns, elevated by the pressure of the gale upon her windward side, sent their missiles high between the upper spars of the merchantman. The *Cristobal,* however, was hulled by two balls, and had her tiller carried away by a third; for, just as her guns were elevated to harmlessness by the list of the deck, so were the merchantman's depressed to a deadly aim by the list of hers.

Taking every advantage which a sound tiller and perfectly trimmed sails gave her over her enemy, the *Heart of the West* raced after the buccaneer. Passing close astern, she raked her with her three larboard guns. Running on, and slanting across the wind's course more and more, she presently had her two after-guns to bear on the three-quarter target of the *Cristobal's* starboard side. The range was middling; but, even so, the gunners sent up a prayer to Luck, so violent were the soarings and sinkings of the deck. The shots were followed by a tottering of high sails above the *Cristobal,* and with a flapping and rending, the mizzenmast fell forward and stripped the main of three of her yards.

Now the disabled, tillerless *Cristobal,* kept before the wind by a great sweep, fled heavily. Her decks were cluttered with snarled wreckage. Half a dozen of her crew were injured. Her commander and Master Silva were mad with rage at the unexpected turn of events.

Aboard the *Heart of the West,* Ouenwa had just pointed out to Kingswell the dashing figure of Pierre d'Antons.

"I take it that this is his last play," remarked the young captain, with a grim smile.

For another hour the merchantman sailed about the pirate at her will, pouring broadside after broadside into hull and rigging, and sustaining but little damage herself. Now and then musket-shots were exchanged. Two of Kingswell's men were wounded, and were promptly carried below, where their hurts were tenderly bandaged by Mistress Kingswell and Maggie Stone.

In a lull of the firing, the cook came running to the poop, with word that Trowley was in a fair way to make matchwood of his surroundings.

"What ails him now?" inquired Kingswell.

"He be shoutin' for a chance at the Frenchers," replied the cook. Kingswell considered the matter, with a calculating eye on the enemy. "Cast him

loose," said he, "and give him a chance to prove himself an English sailor man."

Trowley appeared on deck just as a shot from the Cristobal struck the teakwood rail of the *Heart of the West* amidships. A flying splinter whirred past his head. He brandished his cutlass, and bawled a threat across the rocking water. The men at the guns welcomed him with laughter and cheers.

"Ye be in for the kill, master," cried one.

Kingswell beckoned the ex-commander aft, and met him at the top of the ladder. Trowley looked guiltily this way and that.

"I have let you up, my man," said the captain, "that you may bear a hand in the fight. I am willing to forget your knaveries of the past, and remember only your actions of to-day."

Trowley nodded, and for an instant his eyes met Kingswell's.

"You can see what we have done to the enemy," said the other. "But I am in no mind to break her up with this everlasting cannonading. What would you suggest?"

Trowley straightened his great shoulders and lifted his head. "Lay her aboard, sir," said he, "an' make fast."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

OVER THE SIDE

With a fearful grinding of timbers and rattling of spars, the merchantman's larboard bow scraped along the enemy's side. Boarding-irons were thrown across from the forecastle-deck. With a yell, the men of Devon sprang from rail to rail, and hurled themselves upon the mongrels who clustered to repulse them. Cutlasses skirred in the air; and some struck clanging metal, and some met with a softer resistance. Screams of rage and pain, and shouts of grim exultation, rang above the conflict.

Old Trowley hacked a place for himself in the thickest of the press, and laid about him with such desperate fury and such fearful oaths that the buccaneers hustled each other to get out of his way.

Kingswell, in the waist of the *Cristobal,* encountered D'Antons, and claimed him for his own. As their blades rasped together, D'Antons began the story of Sir Ralph Westleigh's death in the wilder-

ness. Kingswell heard it without comment. The tumult about them gradually subsided, as man after man of the pirate crew was cut down or bound. Sail was shortened on both vessels, and the victors, sound and wounded alike, gathered about the two swordsmen. A strained silence took possession of the watchers. The rough fellows understood that their captain had an old score to settle with the buccaneer. They were fascinated by the lightning play of the rapiers. They noted every movement of foot and hand, blade and eye. When D'Antons snarled an insulting taunt at his adversary, they cursed softly. When their captain pricked the pirate's shoulder, a husky murmur of admiration went through them. So intent were they on the fight that they failed to notice the approach of Miwandi, the Beothic woman, until she was in their midst. But they became aware of her presence when she screamed with rage and flung herself upon Kingswell.

"Pull the wench off," they cried, and made a futile grab at the mad figure.

Kingswell, quick as a cat for all his Saxon colouring, wrenched himself clear of her, avoided the slash of her knife by a half-inch, and lunged through D'Antons' guard. The buccaneer pitched forward so suddenly and heavily that the rapier

was wrenched from the Englishman's hand. The hilt struck the deck. The slim blade darted out between D'Antons' shoulders a full two-thirds of its length. He sprawled on his face, gulping his last breath; and the hilt of Kingswell's weapon knocked spasmodically on the red planking of the deck. The woman, stunned with grief, was led away by two of the seamen.

By the time the duel was over, the long, northern twilight was drawing to a close. The decks of the *Cristobal* were cleared of the dead bodies and the wreckage of guns and spars. The torn rigging was partially repaired; a few sails were set; and the shattered tiller was replaced. The prisoners (wounded and sound together, they did not number a dozen) were divided between the ships. A prize-crew of seven, under the first mate's command, went aboard the *Cristobal*. Then the boarding-irons were cast loose, and the vessels fell away from each other to a safe distance.

Miwandi's grief was desperate. Beatrix strove to comfort her, but failed signally. Her position was evident enough to every one who had seen her frantic attempt to assist D'Antons in the encounter with Kingswell. Beatrix guessed the story. Her face burned at remembrance of her one-time companionship with D'Antons — of the days before

she fully knew his nature, and often sat at cards and chess with him in the little cabin in the wilderness — and of the days before that, when he was one of her admirers in London. Even now she did not know him for her father's murderer. Kingswell had decided to keep that to himself, until some day in the happy future, when the wilderness should be fainter than the memory of a dream in his wife's mind.

For three days the ships kept within sight of each other. On the fourth, a gale of wind drove them apart; but Kingswell felt no anxiety for the prize, for she had received no serious damage to her hull in the bitter encounter that had befallen on his wedding-day.

Aboard the *Heart of the West* the wounded improved daily; the prisoners cursed their irons and their luck; the crew never pulled on a rope without a song to lighten the task; old Trowley, promoted from imprisonment to the position of second mate, worked like a Trojan, and Beatrix and Bernard sped the hours in the high and golden atmosphere of love and youth. The Beothic woman, however, felt no response in her heart to the stir and happiness about her. Her world had fallen in a desolation of emptiness, and her very soul was weary of the sequence of day and night, night and

day. She would not eat. She sobbed quietly, without rest, in her darkened berth. Her ears were deaf to words of comfort, even when they were spoken in her own language by Ouenwa. She asked no questions. Ever since that first outbreak, at sight of her lover's danger, she accepted the will of her pitiless gods without signs of either anger or wonder.

One still night, when the waves rocked under the faint light of the stars without any breaking of foam, and the wind was just sufficient to swell the sails from the yards, the man at the tiller was startled from his reveries by a splash close alongside. He called to the officer of the watch, who had heard nothing, and told him of the sound. They scanned the sea on all sides and listened intently. They saw only the black, vanishing crests. They heard only the whispering of the ship on her way.

"A fish," said the mate. The other agreed with him.

In the morning Miwandi's berth was discovered to be empty, — no trace of her was found alow or aloft.

The remaining days of the passage slipped by without any especial incident. Winds served. Seas were considerate of the good ship's safety,

No fogs endangered the young lovers' homeward voyage. Every night there was fiddling in the forecastle and the chanting of rude ballads. And sometimes in the cabin a violin sang and sang, as if the very heart of happiness were under the sounding-board, and Love himself in the strings.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE MOTHER

Dame Kingswell, the widow of that good merchant of Bristol whom Queen Elizabeth had knighted in her latter days, sat in her chamber and looked down upon a pleasant garden beneath the window. She was alone. Her garments, though of rich materials, were sombre in hue. She wore no personal ornaments save two rings on her left hand, and a chain of gold, bearing a small cross of the same metal, at her breast. Her thick hair was snow-white. In her youth it had been as black as her husband's had been flaxen. Her complexion held scarcely more colour than her hair. On her knees a book of devotional poetry, splendidly illuminated about the margins, lay open. But her thin hands were folded over the page, and her gaze was upon the shrubbery of the garden. The time was early evening. The sunlight was mellow gold. The hedges, shrubs, and fountain on the lawns threw eastward shadows.

The chamber in which the widow sat was large and scantily furnished. A few portraits, by masters of the brush, hung along the walls. A prayer-desk, with a red hassock before it, stood in a corner.

A light rapping sounded on the door. The lady turned her eyes from the bright garden below her window. She saw the door open, and a beautiful girl in cloak and hat enter the room. The stranger advanced quickly, in a whispering of silks, and in her glowing hands took the widow's bloodless fingers.

"My dear," said the elder woman, kindly, "I fear my memory is flitting. I do not recall your winsome face. Can it be that you are one of Sir Felix Brown's lasses, grown to such a fine young lady in London?"

The girl sank on her knees and kissed the pale hands lightly and prettily.

"My name is Beatrix Kingswell," she murmured.

The good dame was sorely puzzled. She tried, in vain, to connect this lovely creature with any branches of the late knight's family.

"Then you are a kinswoman of mine?" she queried. "Pray do not kneel there, my dear. Come sit in the window and tell me who you are."

But the stranger did not move.

"I am your daughter," she said. "And — oh,

do not swoon, my mother — Bernard is at the door, awaiting your permission to enter."

The widow closed her eyes for a second, leaning back in her chair. She recovered herself swiftly and clutched the skirts of the girl, who was now standing, ready to run to the door and admit her husband.

"What story is this?" she cried, incredulous. "I have no daughter. And Bernard, my son, has lain dead in a far land these weary months."

"Nay, dear madam," replied the girl. "Nay, he is not dead. But let me go to the door, and you will see him with your own eyes. He waits at your threshold, happy and well."

The older woman maintained her hold of her visitor's gown. "And who are you, to bring me word of my son's return?" she asked, with a ring of shrewdness and suspicion in her voice. Dimly, she feared that she was affording sport to some heartless person; for this sudden tale of her son's safety, brought by this gay young lady, had broken upon her pensive reveries like an impossible scene out of a play.

"I am his wife," replied Beatrix. With an effort, she pulled her skirts away from the clutching fingers, and sped to the door. Throwing it open, she admitted Bernard. The youth sprang

to where his mother sat, and caught her up from her chair against his breast. With a glad, inarticulate cry, she slipped her arms around his neck and clung hysterically.

Five days after the arrival of the *Heart of the West,* the *Cristobal* sailed into port. By that time the story of her capture was well known in the town, and a crowd of citizens gathered on the docks to welcome her. Master Kingswell put her up for sale. In the end, he bought her himself, for something more than she was worth. Every penny of the money Beatrix gave to the brave fellows who had fought and sailed their ship so valorously on her eventful wedding-day. Only that rugged and wayward master mariner, John Trowley, failed to show himself for a share of the gold. He had not the courage to run a chance of another meeting with Lady Kingswell.

Of the future of Bernard, Beatrix, and the lad Ouenwa, something is written in the old records in an exceeding dry vein. Of the fate of the little fort on Gray Goose River, little is known. Some chroniclers maintain that the French overpowered it; others are as certain that the settlers moved to Conception Bay, and there established themselves

so securely that, even to-day, descendants of those Triggets and those Donnellys cultivate their little crops, cure their fish, and sail their fore-and-afters around the coast to St. John's.

THE END.

L. C. Page & Company's
Announcement List
of New Fiction

Haunters of the Silences. By Charles G. D. Roberts, author of "Red Fox," "The Watchers of the Trails," etc.

Cloth, one volume, with many drawings by Charles Livingston Bull, four of which are in full color . $2.00

The stories in Mr. Roberts's new collection are the strongest and best he has ever written.

He has largely taken for his subjects those animals rarely met with in books, whose lives are spent "In the Silences," where they are the supreme rulers. Mr. Roberts has written of them sympathetically, as always, but with fine regard for the scientific truth.

"As a writer about animals, Mr. Roberts occupies an enviable place. He is the most literary, as well as the most imaginative and vivid of all the nature writers." — *Brooklyn Eagle.*

"His animal stories are marvels of sympathetic science and literary exactness." — *New York World.*

The Lady of the Blue Motor.

By G. SIDNEY PATERNOSTER, author of "The Cruise of the Motor-Boat Conqueror," "The Motor Pirate," etc.

Cloth decorative, with a colored frontispiece by John C. Frohn $1.50

The Lady of the Blue Motor is an audacious heroine who drove her mysterious car at breakneck speed. Her plea for assistance in an adventure promising more than a spice of danger could not of course be disregarded by any gallant fellow motorist. Mr. Paternoster's hero rose promptly to the occasion. Across France they tore and across the English Channel. There, the escapade past, he lost her.

Mr. Paternoster, however, is generous, and allows the reader to follow their separate adventures until the Lady of the Blue Motor is found again and properly vindicated of all save womanly courage and affection. A unique romance, one continuous exciting series of adventure.

Clementina's Highwayman.

By ROBERT NEILSON STEPHENS, author of "The Flight of Georgiana," "An Enemy to the King," etc.

Cloth decorative, illustrated $1.50

Mr. Stephens has put into his new book, "Clementina's Highwayman," the finest qualities of plot, construction, and literary finish.

The story is laid in the mid-Georgian period. It is a dashing, sparkling, vivacious comedy, with a heroine as lovely and changeable as an April day, and a hero all ardor and daring.

The exquisite quality of Mr. Stephens's literary style clothes the story in a rich but delicate word-fabric; and never before have his setting and atmosphere been so perfect.

The Sorceress of Rome. By NATHAN GALLIZIER, author of "Castel del Monte," etc.

Cloth decorative, illustrated $1.50

The love-story of Otto III., the boy emperor, and Stephania, wife of the Senator Crescentius of Rome, has already been made the basis of various German poems and plays.

Mr. Gallizier has used it for the main theme of "The Sorceress of Rome," the second book of his trilogy of romances on the mediæval life of Italy. In detail and finish the book is a brilliant piece of work, describing clearly an exciting and strenuous period. It possesses the same qualities as "Castel del Monte," of which the *Chicago Record Herald* said: "There is color, there is sumptuous word-painting in these pages; the action is terrific at times; vividness and life are in every part; brilliant descriptions entertain the reader; mystic scenes and prophecies give a singular fascination to the tale, which is strong and forceful in its portrayal."

Hester of the Hills. By GROVER CLAY.

Cloth decorative, illustrated $1.50

"Hester of the Hills" has a motif unusual in life, and new in fiction. Its hero, who has only acquired his own strength and resourcefulness by a lifelong struggle against constitutional frailty, has come to make the question of bodily soundness his dominant thought. He resolves to ensure strong constitutions to his children by marrying a physically perfect woman. After long search, he finds this ideal in Hester, the daughter of a "cracker squatter," of the Ozark Mountains of Missouri. But, — he forgot to take into consideration that very vital emotion, love, which played havoc with his well-laid plans.

It is an ingenious combination of practical realism and imaginative fiction worked out to a thoroughly delightful and satisfying climax.

Prisoners of Fortune.

A Tale of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. By Ruel Perley Smith, author of "The Rival Campers," etc.

Cloth decorative, with a colored frontispiece by Frank T. Merrill $1.50

The period of Mr. Smith's story is the beginning of the eighteenth century, when the shores of the American colonies were harassed and the seas patrolled by pirates and buccaneers. These robbed and spoiled, and often seized and put to death, the sailors and fishers and other humbler folk, while their leaders claimed friendship alike with Southern planters and New England merchants, — with whom it is said they frequently divided their spoils.

The times were stern and the colonists were hardy, but they loved as truly and tenderly as in more peaceful days. Thus, while the hero's adventures with pirates and his search for their hidden treasure is a record of desperate encounters and daring deeds, his love-story and his winning of sweet Mary Vane is in delightful contrast.

The Rome Express.

By Major Arthur Griffiths, author of "The Passenger from Calais," etc.

Cloth decorative, with a colored frontispiece by A. O. Scott $1.25

A mysterious murder on a flying express train, a wily Italian, a charming woman caught in the meshes of circumstantial evidence, a chivalrous Englishman, and a police force with a keen nose for the wrong clue, are the ingredients from which Major Griffiths has concocted a clever, up-to-date detective story. The book is bright and spirited, with rapid action, and consistent development which brings the story to a logical and dramatic ending.

The Morning Glory Club. By George A. Kyle.

Cloth decorative, with a colored frontispiece by A. O. Scott $1.25

The doings of the Morning Glory Club will furnish genuine amusement to the reader. Originally formed to "elevate" the village, it quickly develops into an exchange for town gossip. It has a saving grace, however, in the person of motherly Mrs. Stout, the uncultured but sweet-natured and pure-minded village philosopher, who pours the oil of her saneness and charity on the troubled waters of discussion and condemnation.

It is a series of clear and interesting pictures of the humor of village life.

The Chronicles of Martin Hewitt, Detective. New Illustrated Edition. By Arthur Morrison, author of "The Green Diamond," "The Red Triangle," etc.

Cloth decorative, with six full-page drawings by W. Kirkpatrick $1.50

The success of Mr. Morrison's recent books, "The Green Diamond" and "The Red Triangle," has led to an imperative demand for the reissue of "The Chronicles of Martin Hewitt," which has been out of print for a number of years.

It will be remembered that Martin Hewitt is the detective in "The Red Triangle," of whom the *New York Tribune* said: "Better than Sherlock Holmes." His adventures in the London slums were of such a nature that the *Philadelphia North American* said: "The reader who has a grain of fancy or imagination may be defied to lay this book down once he has begun it until the last word is reached."

Mystery Island. By Edward H. Hurst.

Cloth decorative, with a colored frontispiece . $1.50

A hunting camp on a swampy island in the Florida Everglades furnishes the background for this present-day tale.

By the murder of one of their number, the secret of egress from the island is lost, and the campers find themselves marooned.

Cut off from civilization, conventional veneer soon wears away. Love, hate, and revenge spring up, and after the sterner passions have had their sway the man and the woman are left alone to fulfil their own destiny.

While there is much that is unusual in the plot and its development, Mr. Hurst has handled his subject with fine delicacy, and the tale of their love on the beautiful little island is told with deep sympathy and feeling.

The Flying Cloud. By Morley Roberts, author of "The Promotion of the Admiral," "Rachel Marr," "The Idlers," etc.

Cloth decorative, with a colored frontispiece . $1.50

Mr. Roberts's new book is much more than a ripping good sea story such as might be expected from the author of "The Promotion of the Admiral." In "The Flying Cloud" the waters and the winds are gods personified. Their every mood and phase are described in words of telling force. There is no world but the waste of waters.

Mr. Roberts glories and exults in the mystery, the passion, the strength of the elements, as did the Viking chroniclers of old. He understands them and loves them and interprets them as no other writer has heretofore done. The book is too big for conventional phrases. It needs Mr. Roberts's own richness of imagery and masterly expression to describe adequately the word-pictures in this epic of wind and waves.

Selections from L. C. Page and Company's List of Fiction

WORKS OF ROBERT NEILSON STEPHENS

Each one vol., library 12mo, cloth decorative . . . $1.50

The Flight of Georgiana

A ROMANCE OF THE DAYS OF THE YOUNG PRETENDER. Illustrated by H. C. Edwards.

"A love-story in the highest degree, a dashing story, and a remarkably well finished piece of work." — *Chicago Record-Herald.*

The Bright Face of Danger

Being an account of some adventures of Henri de Launay, son of the Sieur de la Tournoire. Illustrated by H. C. Edwards.

"Mr. Stephens has fairly outdone himself. We thank him heartily. The story is nothing if not spirited and entertaining, rational and convincing." — *Boston Transcript.*

The Mystery of Murray Davenport

(40th thousand.)

"This is easily the best thing that Mr. Stephens has yet done. Those familiar with his other novels can best judge the measure of this praise, which is generous." — *Buffalo News.*

Captain Ravenshaw

OR, THE MAID OF CHEAPSIDE. (52d thousand.) A romance of Elizabethan London. Illustrations by Howard Pyle and other artists.

Not since the absorbing adventures of D'Artagnan have we had anything so good in the blended vein of romance and comedy.

The Continental Dragoon

A ROMANCE OF PHILIPSE MANOR HOUSE IN 1778. (53d thousand.) Illustrated by H. C. Edwards.

A stirring romance of the Revolution, with its scene laid on neutral territory.

Philip Winwood

(70th thousand.) A Sketch of the Domestic History of an American Captain in the War of Independence, embracing events that occurred between and during the years 1763 and 1785 in New York and London. Illustrated by E. W. D. Hamilton.

An Enemy to the King

(70th thousand.) From the "Recently Discovered Memoirs of the Sieur de la Tournoire." Illustrated by H. De M. Young.

An historical romance of the sixteenth century, describing the adventures of a young French nobleman at the court of Henry III., and on the field with Henry IV.

The Road to Paris

A STORY OF ADVENTURE. (35th thousand.) Illustrated by H. C. Edwards.

An historical romance of the eighteenth century, being an account of the life of an American gentleman adventurer of Jacobite ancestry.

A Gentleman Player

HIS ADVENTURES ON A SECRET MISSION FOR QUEEN ELIZABETH. (48th thousand.) Illustrated by Frank T. Merrill.

The story of a young gentleman who joins Shakespeare's company of players, and becomes a friend and protégé of the great poet.

WORKS OF
CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS

Red Fox

THE STORY OF HIS ADVENTUROUS CAREER IN THE RINGWAAK WILDS, AND OF HIS FINAL TRIUMPH OVER THE ENEMIES OF HIS KIND. With fifty illustrations, including frontispiece in color and cover design by Charles Livingston Bull.
Square quarto, cloth decorative $2.00

"Infinitely more wholesome reading than the average tale of sport, since it gives a glimpse of the hunt from the point of view of the hunted." — *Boston Transcript.*

"True in substance but fascinating as fiction. It will interest old and young, city-bound and free-footed, those who know animals and those who do not." — *Chicago Record-Herald.*

"A brilliant chapter in natural history." — *Philadelphia North American.*

The Kindred of the Wild

A Book of Animal Life. With fifty-one full-page plates and many decorations from drawings by Charles Livingston Bull.

Square quarto, decorative cover $2.00

"Is in many ways the most brilliant collection of animal stories that has appeared; well named and well done." — *John Burroughs.*

The Watchers of the Trails

A companion volume to "The Kindred of the Wild." With forty-eight full-page plates and many decorations from drawings by Charles Livingston Bull.

Square quarto, decorative cover $2.00

"These stories are exquisite in their refinement, and yet robust in their appreciation of some of the rougher phases of woodcraft. Among the many writers about animals, Mr. Roberts occupies an enviable place. — *The Outlook.*

"This is a book full of delight. An additional charm lies in Mr. Bull's faithful and graphic illustrations, which in fashion all their own tell the story of the wild life, illuminating and supplementing the pen pictures of the author." — *Literary Digest.*

The Heart That Knows

Library 12mo, cloth, decorative cover $1.50

"A novel of singularly effective strength, luminous in literary color, rich in its passionate, yet tender drama." — *New York Globe.*

Earth's Enigmas

A new edition of Mr. Roberts's first volume of fiction, published in 1892, and out of print for several years, with the addition of three new stories, and ten illustrations by Charles Livingston Bull.

Library 12mo, cloth, decorative cover $1.50

"It will rank high among collections of short stories. In 'Earth's Enigmas' is a wider range of subject than in the 'Kindred of the Wild.'" — *Review from advance sheets of the illustrated edition by Tiffany Blake in the Chicago Evening Post.*

Barbara Ladd

With four illustrations by Frank Verbeck.

Library 12mo, cloth, decorative cover $1.50

"From the opening chapter to the final page Mr. Roberts lures us on by his rapt devotion to the changing aspects of Nature and by his keen and sympathetic analysis of human character." — *Boston Transcript.*

Cameron of Lochiel

Translated from the French of Philippe Aubert de Gaspé, with frontispiece in color by H. C. Edwards.
Library 12mo, cloth decorative $1.50

"Professor Roberts deserves the thanks of his reader for giving a wider audience an opportunity to enjoy this striking bit of French Canadian literature." — *Brooklyn Eagle.*

"It is not often in these days of sensational and philosophical novels that one picks up a book that so touches the heart." — *Boston Transcript.*

The Prisoner of Mademoiselle

With frontispiece by Frank T. Merrill.
Library 12mo, cloth decorative, gilt top $1.50

A tale of Acadia, — a land which is the author's heart's delight, — of a valiant young lieutenant and a winsome maiden, who first captures and then captivates.

"This is the kind of a story that makes one grow younger, more innocent, more light-hearted. Its literary quality is impeccable. It is not every day that such a heroine blossoms into even temporary existence, and the very name of the story bears a breath of charm." — *Chicago Record-Herald.*

The Heart of the Ancient Wood

With six illustrations by James L. Weston.
Library 12mo, decorative cover $1.50

"One of the most fascinating novels of recent days." — *Boston Journal.*

"A classic twentieth-century romance." — *New York Commercial Advertiser.*

The Forge in the Forest

Being the Narrative of the Acadian Ranger, Jean de Mer, Seigneur de Briart, and how he crossed the Black Abbé, and of his adventures in a strange fellowship. Illustrated by Henry Sandham, R. C. A.
Library 12mo, cloth, gilt top $1.50

A story of pure love and heroic adventure.

By the Marshes of Minas

Library 12mo, cloth, gilt top, illustrated $1.50

Most of these romances are in the author's lighter and more playful vein; each is a unit of absorbing interest and exquisite workmanship.

A Sister to Evangeline

Being the Story of Yvonne de Lamourie, and how she went into exile with the villagers of Grand Pré.

Library 12mo, cloth, gilt top, illustrated $1.50

Swift action, fresh atmosphere, wholesome purity, deep passion, and searching analysis characterize this strong novel.

WORKS OF
LILIAN BELL

Carolina Lee

With a frontispiece in color from an oil painting by Dora Wheeler Keith. Library 12mo, cloth, decorative cover . . . $1.50

"A Christian Science novel, full of action, alive with incident and brisk with pithy dialogue and humor." — *Boston Transcript.*

"A charming portrayal of the attractive life of the South, refreshing as a breeze that blows through a pine forest." — *Albany Times-Union.*

Hope Loring

Illustrated by Frank T. Merrill.

Library 12mo, cloth, decorative cover $1.50

"Tall, slender, and athletic, fragile-looking, yet with nerves and sinews of steel under the velvet flesh, frank as a boy and tender and beautiful as a woman, free and independent, yet not bold — such is 'Hope Loring,' by long odds the subtlest study that has yet been made of the American girl." — *Dorothy Dix, in the New York American.*

Abroad with the Jimmies

With a portrait, in duogravure, of the author.

Library 12mo, cloth, decorative cover $1.50

"Full of ozone, of snap, of ginger, of swing and momentum." — *Chicago Evening Post.*

At Home with the Jardines

A companion volume to "Abroad with the Jimmies."

Library 12mo, cloth, decorative cover $1.50

"Bits of gay humor, sunny, whimsical philosophy, and keen indubitable insight into the less evident aspects and workings of pure human nature, with a slender thread of a cleverly extraneous love story, keep the interest of the reader fresh." — *Chicago Record-Herald.*

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
A 000 128 812 5